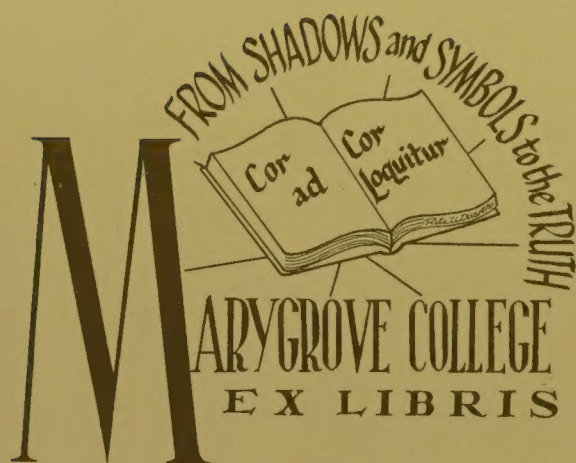




BYGONE DAYS
IN THE MARCH WALL
OF WALES



Warren Millard 1897

SKENFRITH CHURCH FROM THE WEIR

BYGONE DAYS IN THE MARCH WALL OF WALES

by M.N.J., Late of Blackbrooke

WITH ORIGINAL DRAWINGS

BY

WARREN WILLIAMS, A.R.C.A.

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In Remembrance of
MANY HAPPY DAYS

Compiled before the War
for my dear Grandsons who have made the
SUPREME SACRIFICE

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The Venerable Archdeacon Thomas	Chapters on Llewelyn and Grosmont
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GARWAY

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Rev. W. Willis (the late)	The Church
Rev. Father Abbott (the late)	Father Kemble, Priest's Well, etc.
Records of Treago	Private MSS.
Notes on the de Burgh Family	Private MSS.

PREFACE

“We may reject legends if we please, but history would be incomplete without them, for they represent the temper of the people by whom great institutions were founded, and among whom they flourished.”

PHILLOTT.

THESE particulars—collected years ago for my grandsons—were intended only as a guide to Skenfrith and the neighbourhood, so little seemed to be known locally of its history or surroundings ; the idea being to arrange the brief notices given in the various archæological reports, and form them into one little book. Later, it was suggested to me that if these records and translations could be interspersed with some personal particulars of those mentioned in them, together with any local traditions or legends, the book would be more interesting to the general reader. Do what we will, we cannot get away from the influence of history, and the stirring events of past centuries are always interesting, but when our own neighbourhood, our own village even, has played its part, when its acts have been recorded and preserved for hundreds of years, the interest becomes fascination, leading one on, step by step, till every trifle becomes of importance—and so the little book has grown, because it was difficult to know what to leave untold. There are many and varied opinions given here ; some of them may be open to question, but this collection only claims to be a connected series of quotations, and for its many faults I would ask the reader's kind indulgence. I have relied on expert assistance for the translation of extracts from Latin and Anglo-Norman manuscripts at the British Museum and elsewhere.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

Section	PAGE
1 Skenfrith—quaint descriptions from 1800	1
Local Records from 1162	7
2 The Church from 1207 to 1911	12
The Chantry Chapel of St. Noë	59
3 Blackbrooke	62
4 Legends	78
5 The Castle	83
The Lords of Skenfrith	94

CHAPTER II

6 Grosmont Castle (contemporary with Skenfrith)	122
7 Llewelyn the Great, 1194-1240	126
8 Eleanor of Provence (said to have built the Church)	136
9 The Red Rose of Lancaster (origin of)	144
10 Grosmont Church	148
11 John of Kent (died 1348)	171
12 Owen Glendwr (died 1415)	173

CHAPTER III

13 The Knights Templars (locally from 1188)	186
14 Garway (The Templars') Church, 1061	191
15 The Dove-cote, 1326	196
16 Pembridge Castle (contemporary with Skenfrith)	200
17 Spoliation, 1545	202

CHAPTER IV

18 St. Weonards	207
19 Treago (from 1100)	211
20 The Cwm (Jesuit College of St. Xavier, founded 1622)	220
21 Welsh Newton Church	230
Works Consulted	235
Index	241
Spellings of Skenfrith, Grosmont and Whitecastle, from 1162 (Henry II)	xvi

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

SKENFRITH

PAGE

Skenfrith Church from the Weir	<i>Frontispiece</i>	
Skenfrith Bridge (from old woodcut 1800)		2
Skenfrith Castle		4
View of River		5
Buttress to Strengthen Tower		13
Time-stained Oak Door		14
Celtic Gravestone in the Nave		15
In the Nave		15
A Quiet Corner		17
Before Reparation in 1910		24
Lectern representing Saint Bridget in Skenfrith Parish Church	<i>facing</i>	25
Carving of the Head of a Nun		27
Acorns		28
Chalice and Paten		30
Bosses in Sanctuary :		
Badge of St. Bridget ; Fleur-de-Lys ; Single Rose of Lancaster ;		
Tudor Rose		32
Pomegranate		33
Parish Hutch (about 1600)		34
The Priests' Door, Chantry Chapel		36
The Skenfrith Cope	<i>facing</i>	38
Section of the Skenfrith Cope	<i>facing</i>	40
Dovecote Tower		43
Tomb of John Morgan		47
From the Register		52
God's Acre		55
The Monk		56
A Rustic Seat		57
Drawings in St. Noë's Chapel	<i>facing</i>	61
Mark on incised slab		61

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
The Black Brook	62
Old Map of Blackbrooke (from the original in the British Museum)	<i>facing</i> 63
Blackbrooke	<i>facing</i> 67
Chinese Wallpaper in Drawing-room at Blackbrooke	<i>facing</i> 68
Miss Ann Pritchard (the Skenfrith Centenarian)	<i>facing</i> 71
Six Old Friends of Miss Pritchard	<i>facing</i> 73
Skenfrith Castle	79
The Devil and his Dam	80
The Priest's Well	81
Skenfrith Castle : Buck's View	<i>facing</i> 83
"Ye byegone Ladyes"	<i>facing</i> 87
Queens' Pageant	88
Bach Coat-of-Arms	95
De Burgh Shield	97
Seal of Hubert de Burgh	100
Souveigne vous de moy	116
Badge of John of Gaunt	116
It makes us pause—	120

GROSMONT

Grosmont Castle (from an old print)	123
Eleanor's Tower	124
Crossbow and Shield of Llewelyn (Grosmont)	126
Arms of Llewelyn	126
Welsh Bard	127
Joan's Tomb	129
Llewelyn's Silver Harp	130
Rose of Provence	136

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
Red Rose of Lancaster	144
Tudor Rose	145
The Standard	146
Grosmont Church	149
In the Wood	171

GARWAY

Poor Souls' Light	192
Old Norman Arch, Garway Church	193
Bayeux Tapestry : Shield of the Kingdom of Jerusalem ; Shield of the Knights Templars	<i>facing</i> 196
Nest Holes inside the Columbarium	<i>facing</i> 196
Garway Columbarium	196
Doorway to Columbarium	197
Treago	213
Window of the Cwm	221
The Monnow, in the Darren Glen	225
Reliquary in the Church of St. Francis Xavier, Hereford, con- taining the left hand of the martyr John Kemble, beheaded 1679	<i>facing</i> 233

SPELLINGS OF SKENFRITH, GROSMONT AND WHITECASTLE, FROM 1162.

HEREFORTSCR IN WALLIIS

Reign	Skenfrith	Grosmont	Whitecastle
Henry II (1162)	Sinifrid Scenefrict	Gromund	Lentilian
John (1206)	Schenefrid	Grossomonte	Lantelo
(1216)	Skenefrict	Grosso Moto	Castro Lantells
Henry III (1249)	Skenfreythe	Grosmunte	Albo Castro
Ed. I (1291)	Castra de Skenefrid	Castra de Grosso Monto	Blauncchastel
Ed. III (1361)	Skenefreide	Grossmund	Albo Castro
Henry VIII	Skeyn- vreythe Skinfrit Sinfraed Synefraid	Grass Mont	Lantiliock Blaunk Castell Blanc Chapell alias Blaunch Castell
Ed. VI	Skinfrit Skenffrit		
Elizabeth (1580)	Skenevreothe		
James I (1618)	Sconfroth		
Charles I (1634)	Skinvrith	Grossmont	White Castell
Duchy of Lancaster	{	Skenefreth in the March Wall in the Co. of Monmouth	
Fee Farm Rents			

In the *Panton Manuscripts*, by Iola Morganwg, Skenfrith is spelt "Ysgynvraith."

CHAPTER I

Section

- 1 *Skenfrith—quaint descriptions from 1800 ;
Local Records from 1162.*
- 2 *The Church from 1207 to 1911 ;
The Chantry Chapel of St. Noë.*
- 3 *Blackbrooke.*
- 4 *Legends.*
- 5 *The Castle ;
The Lords of Skenfrith.*

SECTION I

SKENFRITH

“ A noyse of streams in sommer morning cleere
The chirp and charme and chaunte of every bird
That passeth, there a second Heaven is—
No helish sound, more like an earthly blis,
A music sweete that through our eares shall creepe
By secrete arte, and lul a man a sleepe.”

THOMAS CHURCHYARD, *The Worthiness of Wales*, 1587.

THE little village of Skenfrith “ in the March Wall ” (Duchy of Lancaster, fee farm rents, Charles I, 1634) nestles down at a point where three sweet valleys meet, not an important place now, it is true, but unique in its surroundings, and “ girt about with memories.”

Ten miles by the high road, from the picturesque town of Ross, about eight from Monmouth and Pontrilas, it is out of the track of tourists and has few visitors. It is quite an event if there are guests at “ The Bell ” or strangers looking at the church and castle.

Truly a change from the stirring times it has known !

High up, on the hill behind the village, you get a perfect panorama, as far as the eye can reach, and extending into half a dozen counties.



SKENFRITH BRIDGE (FROM OLD WOODCUT 1800)

THE VILLAGE OF SKENFRITH

Away to the west the Black Mountains run level against the sky-line,—but between them and you on a clear day, with varying lights and shades, there seem many ranges, rising one behind another, till the valley narrows down to the golden meadows bordering the Monnow's banks, and the Graig and Garway Hill rise majestically on either side, with the winding silvery river almost at their base.

Passing close by the churchyard and the ruined castle, the Monnow wanders on past the little fishing Inn and under the bridge which links England and Wales (if we may call Monmouthshire Wales). It is a bridge for the angler to smoke his pipe upon, warmed by the memories of a good day's sport. A careful look into any of the stiller pools will be sure to reveal more than one lusty trout, and possibly a grayling—then away the river flows through flowery fields; you can trace it for miles between the hills, and, in the hazy mist beyond, distinguish Monmouth town, and the Forest of Dean behind, with the range of the Cotswolds, blue in the far away.

To the south west lies Abergavenny, hidden from sight by soft purple mountains, but the Skyrrid (or "Holy Mountain" where local tradition says the ark rested !), and the Sugar Loaf—each stands apart, sharp and clear against the sky.

In 1807 the poet Bloomfield wrote of this country :—

“ Good Heavens ! must scenes like these expand,
Scenes so magnificently grand,
And millions breathe and pass away,
Unblessed throughout their little day
With one short glimpse ? ”

In the centre of the village stands the castle. The courtyard, once strongly garrisoned and almost impregnable, is now an orchard, and under its masses of sweet blossom the sheep graze peacefully. For centuries the ivy has clothed the ruined towers

IN THE MARCH WALL

and "Juliet" (see p. 86)—dignified and gloomy, as if mindful of the light of other days so long since fled, but

"Time's gradual touch
Has mouldered into beauty many a tower,
Which, when it frowned with all its battlements,
Was only terrible."

It is especially interesting to read the quaint old descriptions of Skenfrith valley and the surrounding country, showing the impression made by their beauty on the minds of various writers.



SKENFRITH CASTLE

Britton in his *Monmouthshire* in 1809 writes :—

"Immediately on our left the Graig, a huge solitary mountain (which commands a boundless prospect in every direction), reared its towering sides from the low-lands in uncontended majesty, and accompanied our road to the pleasing little village of Grosmont which, though a small village, was once a place of considerable importance, and was governed by a Mayor and Burgesses."

Coxe in his *Monmouthshire* says in 1801 :—

"Before the formation of roads under the Turnpike Act, those of Monmouthshire were proverbially bad."

OLD-TIME MONMOUTHSHIRE ROADS

Valentine Morris of Piercefield, being asked at the Bar of the House of Commons "What roads are there in Monmouthshire?" replied, "None."—"How then do you travel?" "In ditches."

"The roads were simply hollows, formed by the action of water-courses between the hills, with large banks and lofty hedges thrown up on either side, to prevent trespass.

"In these Alpine gutters (for by no other name can they be designated) the centre is invariably the lowest part, and frequent transverse channels run across, to prevent the too rapid descent of carriages, and to convey water to adjacent ponds.

"The horse way to Skenfrith leaves the carriage road about five miles from Monmouth, and after traversing St. Maughan's Common, proceeds through a narrow, steep and stony lane, overgrown with thickets, and pitched with large stones, placed edgewise in the boggy soil; these stones being broken or displaced, a succession of uneven steps is formed, and horses not accustomed to such rugged ways continually stumble and flounder.

"By the side of this road a pleasant walk runs through the fields, on the slopes overlooking the vale of the Monnow.

"In the vicinity of lanes like these such footways are common in Monmouthshire, which those who are fond of walking will traverse with much delight; though the way is rugged, it is extremely cool and pleasant."



VIEW OF RIVER

IN THE MARCH WALL

The following description of this part of the country was written in 1838 :—

“The high lands are occupied by oak coppices, which are numerous and extensive ; they are felled at from periods of sixteen to twenty years, and fetch a price from eighteen to twenty-six pounds an acre, the bark included.

“The highest wages paid to agricultural labourers is nine shillings a week and in winter six shillings a week is given. Cider is allowed in summer, and some labourers at this season will drink ten and even twelve quarts a day.”

In Gough's *Camden* is the following :—

“The air is healthy and the population long lived. The average duration of life is longer than in most parts of the kingdom. It is said that Serjeant Hoskins entertained James I in his progress here with a ‘Morris dance’ by ten old men and women, whose united ages exceeded one thousand years.

“The oxen of the country are of a very large kind, very docile and useful for agricultural purposes. When fatted they weigh from seven to nine hundred weight, and sell for £50 to £60 per pair.”

Lord Scudamore, who died in 1671, originally imported from Flanders the breed of cattle now called “Herefords.”

Heath, who wrote in 1810, tells us :—

“Most of the people keep goats, from ten to seventy in a flock, which furnish them with milk and cheese ; they pasture on the commons which are thickly studded with them.”

“The provincial language spoken here is the ‘Gwentian,’ one of the dialects of Wales in which many odes were composed, and it was considered for centuries the purest, except that of the Gwnedd, used in Cambria” (Britton's *Monmouthshire*).

“In 1800 the table of the population of Monmouthshire was published by the authority of Parliament. In the Hundred of Skenfrith there were 726 houses and 3,331 persons” (Manby's *Guide to Monmouthshire*).

“The Skenfrith Hundred was divided for parochial purposes into upper and lower divisions. The former included the parishes

FEUDAL TERMS

of Grosmont, Langua, Llantilio-Crassenny, Llanvihangel-tavern-Bach, Llanfair, and Skenfrith.

"The lower division contained the parishes of Dixon-Newton, Llangattock-veibon-aval, St. Maughan's, Rockfield, Welch-Bicknor, and Wonastow" (Coxe's *Monmouthshire*).

LOCAL RECORDS FROM 1162

The following are very interesting local records, but it would perhaps be as well to give an explanation before going further, of some of the old law terms which are constantly used in them. "Escheat," from the French "escheoir," signifies any lands or tenements that casually fall to a lord within his manor, by way of forfeiture, or by the death of his tenant, leaving no heir general or special.

"Frank-pledge," from the French "franc" and "pledge," signifying a pledge or surety for the behaviour of freemen, it being the ancient custom of the kingdom, borrowed from the Lombards, that for the preservation of the public peace, every freeborn man at the age of fourteen (religious persons, clerks, etc., excepted) should give security for his truth towards the King and his subjects, or be committed to prison; whereupon a certain number of neighbours usually became bound one for another, to see each man of their pledge forthcoming at all times, or to answer the transgression done by any gone away.

"Frank-almoign" is a tenure by spiritual service where an ecclesiastical corporation, sole or aggregate, holds land to them and their successors of some lord and his heirs in free and perpetual alms.

"Seizin," feudal term for taking possession.

"Heriot," the best beast that the tenant dies possessed of, due to the Lord of the Manor.

"Pannage," the right of pasturing swine in a forest.

Here is the first local record we have found:—

Herefordscr in Walliis. Pipe Rolls of Henry II. (1162) Nova placita et nove conventiones (new pleas and new agreements).

Hugo de Croft renders an account of £21 14s. 4d. of the Farms

IN THE MARCH WALL

of Grosmund and of Lentilian and of Sinifrid (Skenfrith). In the Treasury £7 18s. 6d.

(During the reign of King John, the records refer only to the castle and the advowson of the church to be dealt with later.)

The next is in 34 Henry III. *Inquisitio post mortem*, 1249.

"The jurors say that the manor of Skenefrid is worth per annum in demesnes £12, and there are six plough lands, of which each is worth 40s. per annum.

"In fixed rents the manor is worth £22 4. 6 per annum.

In the service of customary tenants it is worth 4 marks per annum.

In the issues of the Mill, £9 per annum.

In pannage, one mark per annum.

In heriots, 10 marks per annum.

In the issues of eels (*anguillarum*), 3. 9d. per annum.

In meadows and pastures, 15. 6."

Henry III. (1267) *Duchy of Lancaster Ancient Deeds*.

Grant by William the Abbot and the Convent of Dore, to Edmund son of King Henry, of certain lands in Whitecastle and Grosmont in exchange for other rents in Whitecastle, Skenfrith and Grosmont in the co. of Monmouth and 9d. yearly rent for half the bovate of lands of the fee of Skenefrede on the hill.

One of the witnesses to this deed was Hugh de Vien, Vicar of Skenefrede.

Patent Roll, 13 Edward I (1284):

"Fulton, R. de Rous, E. de Berkelegh and Robert de Seyc agreed to take an assize of novel disseisin, which Weyruilla (who was the wife of John de Skenefreyth) arraigned against Durandus de Monemuth and others, concerning a tenement in Skenefreyth."

All the particulars of Skenfrith during the reign of Edward III refer to the Castle, and no special mention of the immediate neighbourhood has been found until:

36 Henry VIII (1544); when the value of the land which that King took from the monastery of Grâce Dieu is given (see Section on Skenfrith Church).

EXTRACTS FROM LOCAL RECORDS

The next is :

2 Edward VI (1548) ; when we find from the Court Rolls of the Duchy of Lancaster, that at a Court with view of frankpledge held at Brode Oke on 9th of April 1548 before William Scudamore gent, deputy of John Scudamore, Steward of the Duchy :

“ The jurors present that there was an affray and a drawing of blood between (here follow the names), the fines in each case being sixpence.”

This Court also considers the death dues on the farm of a man lately deceased which was rented of the King at 2s. “ Whereupon there came to the King in the name of a heriot 1 dun coloured fowl price 2od.”

“ And that Joan ap Madock paid to the King as heriot 1 brass dish worth 2s. (Cwm Maddock farm, near Broad Oak.) ”

The parcel of land called “ Cocksyath ” (Cock’s Heath) passes from Thomassyn wife of Thomas ap Rys to her son.

Among the twelve jurors are four Maddocks (of Cwm Maddock) and two Seycylls (“ Cecil ” of the Duffryn), members of whose family were afterwards both patrons and vicars of the church.

MARY ;

The only item found for Mary’s reign concerns the lands in Skenfrith formerly belonging to the Abbey of Grâce Dieu—1555. (See Section on the Church.)

There are many locally interesting extracts from the “ Survey of the Duchy of Lancaster ” during the reign of ELIZABETH ;

who, as Duchess of Lancaster, was Lady of the Manor of Skenevreithe. From the Court Roll of the Duchy we have the following (from the Latin) :

“ View of the frankpledge of the Lady the Queen, of her manor of Skenevreoth with the Court of the said manor, held there on Wednesday to wit the eleventh day of May 22 Elizabeth (1580) before William Owen gent., Under steward of Henry Earl of Pembroke, Chief steward.”

(Here follow the names of eighteen jurors.)

IN THE MARCH WALL

“The jurors say that John ap Prichard gent. who held within the said manor (of Skenefrethe) one messuage called Plas-y-vor, and divers parcels of land thereto belonging has died since the last Court and his best animal an ox has accrued to the Queen as a heriot.”

The following places (still known by the same names) are also mentioned at this Court. Norton—Walston—Tyre-gaute—Tye Gwyn—Ostery—Treheron—Ales Barkyte—all of which were inherited on the death of her father, by Juliana Cockes.

Many particulars are given in the Duchy of Lancaster Special Commission records, concerning Skenfrith itself. The following are examples :—

5 Elizabeth (1563) Skenefreithe.

Survey of the woods growing upon the manors and of the condition of the fabric of the castles of Skenefreythe, Grosse Monte and White Castels. (See Section on Skenfrith Castle.)

7 Elizabeth (1565). Skenefreithe Lordship.

“Imprimis a wood there, called Coyde pittes, conteyneth vij acres, nil valet.

“Item a wood there, called Coyde huhelters, conteyneth v acres, nil valet.

“Item, a wood there, called Coyde Angroud, conteyneth xj acres, nil valet.” (Coed-Anghred (the wood of unbelief) on which the Roman Catholic chapel stood, lately pulled down. Col. Bradney, *Hist. of Monmouthshire*.)

32 Elizabeth (1589). Report on the felling of timber without permission : River Mone—Enquiry and certificate respecting the right of John Scudamore to have a mill and weir on the river Mone.

7 James I (1610) :

“The mill of Skenfrith is worth in fee farm of all that water mill of Skenfrith in Co. Monmouth with all the soc and suit and other profits to the said mill belonging, and with all the messuages, lands, tenements, etc., which said mill was granted (*inter alia*) to Edward Ferrers and Francis Philipp and their heirs in fee farm for ever by letter patent of King James I, dated 11 February

EXTRACTS FROM LOCAL RECORDS

1610 to hold by fealty only in free and common socage, and not in chief or by knight's service, paying therefor yearly per annum xxij. iiij."

From the Depositions of the Duchy of Lancaster. 16 James I (1619):

The Attorney General versus Phillip Morgan, Holm lands at Skenfrith, with two plans.

This suit continues until the third year of Charles I (1628). Phillip Morgan was probably the son of John Morgan whose tomb is in the church, and the father of John who was patron of the church in 1654. The Morgans lived at the Waen and were a powerful and influential family (the meadows by the weir and castle are still called the "Holm-lands").

5 Charles I (1629):

Return consisting of names of freeholders, tenants and parishioners of Skinfrith, and the sums payable by them in respect of an assessment made by order of the Duchy Court.

7 Charles I (1631):

Names of persons who claimed and of those who disclaimed benefit in the commons and wastes of Skinfrith, Grosmount and Whitecastles.

8 Charles I (1632):

Disclaimer signed by thirteen of the free tenants renouncing all right title and interest in the commons and wastes of Skinfrith, Grosmont and Whitecastles.

9 Charles I (1633):

The value of the Manor of Grossemont, Skenfrith, etc., was xiii. iiij. (13/4).

9 Charles I (1633):

Appointments of waste lands in the manors of Skinfrith, Grosmont and Whitecastles of a yearly rent of £25 (with plan).

Charles I, 26 May 1631:

Hundred of Skinfrith—Certificate of Justices of the Peace.

Measures taken for the relief of the poor and abatement in the price of corn.

IN THE MARCH WALL

Names of poor children bound apprentices in the Hundred of Skenfreth.

3 July, 1635 :

Justices of the Peace have kept watch and ward, set the poor on work, relieved the aged and the impotent, took course for observance of Lent and fasting days, punished 83 vagrants, suppressed 72 unlicensed ale houses, licensed 56, and apprenticed 58 poor children.

SECTION 2

THE PARISH CHURCH (DEDICATED TO ST. BRIDGET) FROM 1207 TO 1911

The first record we have found of the castle since Saxon times is in the 9th year of Henry II, and the earliest of the church is dated 1207. It is supposed to have been built about the same time as the later portions of the castle, and there appears to be no doubt that, together with the King, the successive lords of the castle were joint patrons, for we find that the castles were always conferred "with all their lands, tenements, knight's fees and *advowsons of churches*," and yet we also find the living is mentioned as "by the gift of the King." It was probably not too large in those days for the retinue of the castle and for the population of the neighbourhood (Mrs. Bagnall Oakeley).

The Border warfare ceased after the reign of Henry V, and when Edward VI came to the throne, he ordered all the castles of the Duke of Lancaster to be "sleighted and made untenable." This would not be without its effect upon the church ; the population would rapidly decrease, and also the revenues of the church : for those engaged in agriculture only could not keep it in its former glory.

Then came the troublous times of Henry VIII, who seized upon the advowson and confiscated the lands of the church, destroying the Abbey of Grâce Dieu to which it then belonged.

Later followed the unrest of Cromwell's time, when the vicars were "outed, plundered and undone" for loyalty to Charles I. Until lately, there had been no reparation since 1681. Is it

THE CHURCH OF ST. BRIDGET

surprising that after 230 years something definite had to be done to save the church from utter ruin ?

The fact that the recent work was placed in the hands of the architect of the " Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings " (Mr. Weir), was sufficient security that all its structural beauties would be left untouched, and only strengthened and preserved.

The reparation has now been completed, but this has not been carried out without much energy, hard work, and anxiety on the part of those interested. (1910).

The outside of the church is one of the most picturesque and beautiful in colouring of any village church in England. It has that " soft, warm tint, left by the pencil of corroding time." The tower is surmounted by a curious belfry contrived in a most remarkable fashion like an open lantern of timber, known as a " Dove-cote Tower " of which it is the most perfect specimen (Mrs. Bagnall Oakeley).



BUTTRESS TO STRENGTHEN TOWER

In peaceful days it is not easy fully to realise the terrible times when warfare cast a gloom over the neighbouring land. Our forefathers had not only to fear foes from foreign shores, but had to protect themselves against the inroads of their neighbours. Castles were not the only fortified places ; church towers, more especially on the Border lands, were strongly built and garrisoned, and offered a place of safety in time of need, a " keep " in miniature for the defence of the church (Andrew's *Church Treasury*).

In this tower of Skenfrith there was a square aperture (filled up

IN THE MARCH WALL

at the reparation, as the tower was then made into a vestry) ; this was probably designed for passing provisions to those who protected it, or to those who took refuge within its walls, for the right of sanctuary appertained to all parish churches.

“ A wealth of interest hangs about the old church porch, for it was formerly something more than a mere ornament or even a protection ; it was a recognised portion of the sacred building, and had its appointed place in the service of the church. Baptism was frequently administered there, to symbolise that by that Sacrament the infant entered Holy Church ; then it was customary to throw

open the north door, that the Devil, formally renounced at that rite, might by that way ‘ flee to his own place ’ ” (Tyack, *Eccles. Curiosities*).

Over the entrance to the porch is an ancient carving of the head of a nun, supposed to represent St. Bridget, the patron saint of the church.

The massive time-stained oak door is studded with heavy iron nails, and in it is a small “ wicket,” by which you enter, except on Sunday, when the big door is



TIME-STAINED OAK DOOR

open. Above is a tympanum of three arches ; but the design cannot now be traced. On the right is the Holy water stoup ; its date is probably the same as the piscina in the chancel : about the middle of the 13th century.

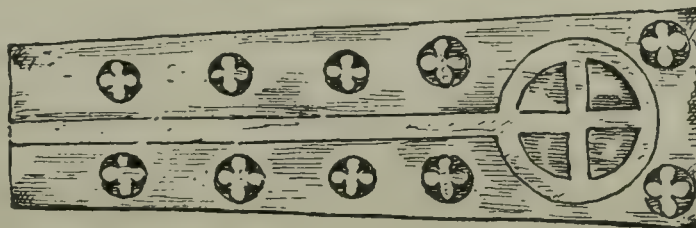
A great number of parish churches of stone were raised by Norman builders, a characteristic of their architecture being the semicircular headed arch. In the transition to the Early English style in the latter half of the 12th century the arch became pointed, and it is interesting to note that those in the nave of

FRAGMENTS OF STAINED GLASS

Skenfrith church are early examples of this type (Professor E. W. Tristram).

The north aisle is of Decorated work and very large stones were used in its construction.

In the floor of this aisle is a handsome coffin lid of the same date. Alterations and additions were made in the nave and chancel during the Perpendicular period, and



CELTIC GRAVESTONE IN THE NAVE

some of the windows belonging to that date were at one time stained, but only a few scanty fragments of glass remain, some of them howing the Roses of York and Lancaster (Mrs. Bagnall Oakeley). These were collected by a former vicar, and with modern additions made into an east window.

During the tumultuous reigns of John and Henry III the powerful leaders of the Baronage were those most closely identified with the church, as patrons and benefactors, but monks and priests were not allowed to pursue the noiseless tenor of their way altogether undis-

turbed. Their position on the Border could not have been very secure, during the hostilities against the Welsh, who maintained more or less complete in-



IN THE NAVE

dependence. From 1205 to 1210 William de Braose, Lord of Abergavenny, one of the most powerful of the Lords Marchers,

IN THE MARCH WALL

was in possession of the castles of Grosse Monte, Skenefride and Lanteilo* (Fine Rolls 9 John), and we find that in 1207 "the priest of Skenfrith, Matthew de Hereford, paid ten marks to the King to send letters to William de Braose to permit him quietly to enjoy his church of Skenefrid, which he had of the gift of the King" (Phillott, *Diocesan Hist.*). This implies interference by de Braose, who was much disliked and distrusted for his overbearing manners and ostentatious religion.

The next year (1208) Pope Innocent III excommunicated John, and placed England under an Interdict, being determined to free the Church of England from the Royal tyranny. Then all worship, save that of a few privileged orders, and all administration of the Sacraments ceased over the length and breadth of the country. The church bells were silent and the dead were buried without ceremony.

The King replied by confiscating all the lands of the clergy, and by heaping every outrage and indignity upon them. After six years (on the 29th of June 1214) the Interdict was withdrawn on the submission of John to the Pope. It is interesting to notice that only two days later the King, as patron of the living of Skenfrith, makes the following appointment :

"Matthew de Cygoin has letters Patent of the Lord the King, of presentation to the church of Skenefrythe, in the gift of the King, to hold for his life in frank almoigne, and letters are directed to the Lord H. Bishop of Llandaff. Witness the King at Rupenmonach first of July 1214" (Patent Roll).

The next year the "King grants to John, son of Peter the Saracen, a Roman citizen, the church of Scenefriet now vacant, which is in the gift of the King, to hold for his life, and letters are directed to the Lord Bishop of Hereford" Giles de Braose, at this time Lord of Skenfrith (Patent Rolls. 1215).

Shortly before his death in 1216 John gave the advowson to "our well beloved and faithful John de Mōne," but his son Henry III forfeited all the lands of John de Monmouth and gave them to

* Grosmund, Lentilian, Sinifrid—spelling given as in the originals.

THE ABBEY OF GRÂCE DIEU, NEAR MONMOUTH

his son Edmund Cruxback, who in 1291 transferred the advowson to the Abbot of Grâce Dieu, a Cistercian Priory built by John de Monmouth in 1226, "to the honour of the Blessed Virgin."

"*Grâce of Dew*. An abbey of white monkes stonding in a wood and having a rille running by hit, veri good pastures be about this place. It stondeth in a wood twixt Wisk and Raglande iii miles from Cairwisk and iii from Raglande" (Dugdale's *Monasticon*). The Abbey was wholly destroyed by the Welsh in 1233; it was, however, partly rebuilt, for we find in the Patent Roll 19 Edward I, 1291, "Inspeximus" and confirmation of a Charter of Edmund the King's brother, to the Abbot and Convent of Grâce Dieu, in the Diocese of Llandaff, dated Grosmont, Wednesday, the eve of All Saints, granting them the advowson of the Church of Skenefreithe in frank-almoynes for the souls of King Henry III his father, and of Queen Eleanor his mother.

Henry VIII dissolved this monastery in 1545 (at which time there were only two monks and an income of £26), and he seized upon the lands and the advowson of Skenfrith church.

Patent Rolls 1555 (Philip and Mary) give the following particulars of the Priory lands in Skenfrith.



A QUIET CORNER

IN THE MARCH WALL

"The King and Queen for the sum of £296 paid by Thomas Herbert, grant to him all those two parcels of land lying in Skene-frid and all the lands also lying in White-chapel alias White Castle—all the Priory lands of Gracia Dei—to hold to him, and to his heirs for ever, by fealty only, in free soccage, and not in chief."

In "Taxatio Ecclesiastica Anglie et Wallie," A.D. 1291 (19 Edward I), the taxation of the church of Skenefreythe according to its true value is £13 6s. 8d.

Minister's Account

Duchy of Lancaster, Minister's Acct. 43 Edward III (1369).			
	Sum total	£57 19 8½	& ½ a fart ^s
Cost of houses within the castle with the tower		6 13 3½	
(St. Noyes) or Noë Chantry		Nothing	
D. of L.	do. 19 Richard II (1396)		
	Total amount	60 14 2	
D. of L.	do. 5 Henry IV (1403)		
	Sum total	57 1 9¾	
D. of L.	do. 7 Henry V (1419)	74 19 0	
D. of L.	do. 2 Henry VI (1423)		
	Same as above		
D. of L.	do. Henry VI		
(Top of roll missing)		Total	64 4 7¾

The next record of Skenfrith church which gives the tithes is from

Valor Ecclesiasticus 26 Henry VIII.

Parish Church of Skenfreythe.

"Sir Thomas ap Jevon Vicar there."

For tithes of land	X	
" " sheaves	X	
" " forgotten	XX	
" " hay	XVI	
" " pigs and geese		XII
" " cows and calves	XX	

THE CHURCH RECORDS

For tithes of lambs and wool	..	..	..	11/-	111/-
„ „ candles in the purification of St. Mary	..	..	..		11/-
„ „ linen and hemp or canvas	..	..		1/-	
„ „ orchards and gardens	..	..			1/-
„ „ minor tithes	..	..	..		111/-
For the purification of women	..	..	..		6/-
Tithes of mills	..	..	..	1/-	
Rolls of devotions	..	..	..		5/-
				115/-	X
Tenth thereof				10/-	VIII

(From "Churches in Llandaff Diocese," Archdeacon Green, 1907.)

1535	Rectorial tythes	£2	13	4
	Vicarage worth	5	16	10
1603	Vicarage worth	18	0	0
	Impropriation	30	0	0
(belonged to the King)				

In 1634 (Liber Institutionum) it is given as £5 16s. 10d.

In 1745 (Clergyman's Intelligencer) as £35 os. 0d.

In 1827 (Liber Institutionum) the Living of Skenfrith is again mentioned as a Rectory.

In 1854 Mr. Speke purchased the advowson from Admiral Lysart and Mrs. Pugh, for his son, the Revd. William Speke, who became Vicar the following year and patron on the death of his father. During his time there was an addition to the tithes of £34 yearly, subject to average.

In 1889 the advowson was purchased by Robert Newton Jackson of Blackbrooke.

Welsh Church disestablished 1920.

Estimated value of Living £172.

IN THE MARCH WALL

The poet Langland, a writer of the fourteenth century and author of "The Vision of Piers Ploughman," who was familiar with the March country, describes the clergy of the Welsh Marches, introducing one, who says of himself :—

" By Marie
I count na moore concience
By so I cacche silver,
Than I do to drynke
A draughte of gode ale."

There is preserved in the library of " Corpus Christi " in Oxford, under the date 1646, a Survey of the Ministry of Herefordshire " with the parishes, patrons, and incumbents ; their labours, lives, and livings." It reports that " preaching is uncommon, sometimes once a month, or only on Christmas day." In one of the Hundreds it says " there is no preaching minister." Some parishes are supplied by curates " who can scarce reade," " a poor unpreaching curate," " the vicar is a singing man," and the like (Phillott, *Diocesan Hist.*).

Strype, the historian of the Reformation, writing in 1567, tells us :—

" For the most parte the pristres are too olde, they saye, to be put to schole, and there are not six yt can preache in ye three sheirres."

About 1597 an hour glass was set up on the pulpits—an obvious indication that preaching was not discouraged, but many chapels were either unserved, or served with a reader only.

Non-residence was often due to the poverty of endowments and the thinness of the population. " I will show thee in the Hundred of Webtree four and twenty parishes not any one of all able to maintain a preaching minister, and of Turnaston that it hath only one inhabitant to make a congregation."

* * * *

Special licenses given from time to time to preachers show the rarity of preaching, " to preach during good behaviour," to use prudence and simplicity and " to preach in English."

THE VICARS OF SKENFRITH

The Commissioners had power to reject all ministers presented to livings if they considered them unfit, and to turn out those who, being in possession, were deemed unworthy.

* * * *

1642. When David Lewis had been vicar of Skenfrith about 29 years, he was "outed" by the Commissioners, for crimes laid to his charge for loyalty to King Charles I; and for refusing to take the oath called "the Solemn League and Covenant" he was "plundered and undone, and his family reduced to much misery." His successor also suffered in like manner. Walker in his *Sufferings of the Clergy*, says "Vicaridge and Rectory of Skenfrith—there were at least two sufferers in this living."

* * * *

VICARS OF SKENFRITH.

The following is a list of the vicars and patrons of Skenfrith for the last 720 years, so far as can be gathered from the manuscripts in the British Museum, Lambeth Library, and the Record Office.

The Diocesan Registrar has also kindly given his help.

Parish of Skenfrith.		Church of St. Bridget
<i>Vicar.</i>	<i>Date.</i>	<i>Patron.</i>
Mathew de Hereford	1207	King John
"Paid 10 marks to the King," etc.,		
Mathew de Cygoyn	1214	16 John, 1214
"To hold for his life in frank almoigne"		
John, son of Peter Saracini	1215	,,
"A Roman citizen" to hold for life		
?	1245	Henry III
Hugh de Vien	1267	Edmund Cruxback
Advowson transferred to Abbot of		
Monastery of Grâce Dieu by Edmund		
Cruxback in frank almoigne. Con-		
firmed by Edward I at Grosmont, Eve		
of All Saints, 1291	1291	
?	1292	Abbot of Grâce Dieu
?	1296	,,

IN THE MARCH WALL

Parish of Skenfrith.		Church of St. Bridget.	
<i>Vicar.</i>		<i>Date.</i>	<i>Patron.</i>
Sir (D'n's) Thomas ap Jevon.. ..	1535	Abbot of Grâce Dieu	
Gives list of his tythes		Henry VIII destroyed this Mon-	
		astery in 1545	
"Hugh ap Howell—Clerk. The Fee Farm of whose lands came into the hands of the King by reason of the attainder of the said Hugh"	1545	"	
(D. of L. Fee Farm rents)		"	
(Manor of Skenfrith Charles I, 1634)			
<i>Reformation.</i>			
<i>Vicar.</i>		<i>Date.</i>	<i>Patron.</i>
?	1548	Seycylle (Cecil)	
Roger ap Rosser	1591	? ?	
Tried in Monmouth re chapel of St. Noyes Blackbrooke (Commandments painted in chancel).			
David Hopkins, Clerk	?		
Was interested in the moiety thereof (Holm lands) for the whole term of years (now deceased) (D. of L. Decrees 1620)			
David Lewis	1613		
When he had been Vicar 29 years he was "outed" for loyalty to Charles I by the Commissioners of Cromwell. He was "plundered and undone and his family reduced to much misery"			
"	1642		
"Suffered in like manner as his predecessor." (1645, see curious entry in Register, p. 52)			
Lewis Parry	1654	"The Commis-	
		sioners of Crom-	
		well, on the rec-	
		ommendation of	
		John Morgan "	
New Font, and South Aisle restored	1661		

THE VICARS OF SKENFRITH

<i>Vicar.</i>	<i>Date.</i>	<i>Patron.</i>
“ Jacobus Phillippes Vicarius de Sconfroth ” (He died in 1725 and was buried in the Sanctuary with his wife and two daughters) North Aisle restored	1679 1681	PhillipCecile Gent. (Sheriff in 1665.) Buried at Gross- mount, 1699 Chalice and Paten presented 1693
<i>From Liber Institutionum.</i>		
William Stephens	1725	John Stephens, Gent.
Richard Reece, Sen.	1733	James Walwyn Esq.
Richard Reece, Jun.	1734	”
Walwyn Cecill	1738	Robert Wheeler for this turn
John Davis	1760	Walwyn Cecill, clerk
“ 1765 Sconfroth newe six belles first did begin to ring.”		
John Crowe	1772	William Cecill, The Duffryn, clerk
Phillip Hastings Cecill	1778	”
Thos. Phillips, curate	1813 to 1825	
J. B. Bourne, curate	1825 to 1841	
William Norton	1827	Sarah Pugh and John Briggs Esq. (of Blackbrooke)
Joseph Darby	1830	Sarah Pugh, widow in full right
George Miller (Stopped Churchyard Sports and Wake)	1841	Ditto
Stephen C. Baker (Repaired stone pulpit)	1846	Ditto
Peter de Lom	1853	Admiral Lysart & Sarah Pugh
William Speke (Removed carved square pews, min- strels' pew, lowered stone pulpit, and made open seats)	1855	George Speke Esq. in full right

IN THE MARCH WALL



BEFORE REPARATION IN 1910



LECTERN REPRESENTING SAINT BRIDGET IN SKENFRITH
PARISH CHURCH

RESTORATIONS TO THE CHURCH

<i>Vicar.</i>		<i>Date.</i>	<i>Patron.</i>
Christopher Leonard Garde, M.A.	..	1889 to 1923	William Speke (Vicar) R. Newton Jackson of Blackbrooke (died 15th Dec. 1919)
Welsh Church disestablished		1920	
Revd. S. Evans		1923	Bishop of Mon- mouth
Estimated value of Living £172			

1910.

REPARATION.

Church repaired and old stone tiled roof replaced.

Windows re-lead.

Mural paintings uncovered.

Sixteenth century commandments copied.

Minstrels' pew restored.

Stone pulpit again lowered.

Standards for lamps.

New oak seats.

Carving in the Sanctuary.

Case for Cope.

New Books.

New Lectern (St. Bridget).

Bells re-hung.

Land for Extension of Churchyard.

The church was reopened for service, and the addition to the churchyard consecrated by the Lord Bishop of Llandaff, on the 18th June 1910.

IN THE MARCH WALL

THE PATRON SAINT : SAINT BRIDGET.

A.D. 454 to 521—(St. Brahid—St. Ffraid).

In the list of parishes in Monmouthshire copied from the Panton MSS. by Iolo Morganwg in 1799, Skenfrith is called “Ysgynvraith” after a sixth century chieftain, son of Cyndrwn Prince of Powys.

It is very interesting to notice that the Celtic name of its patron saint St. Ffraid can be traced in one of the earliest records found of Skenfrith, 10 Henry II (1163), when the spelling of Skenfrith was Sinfrid (St. Frid, or St. Freit), and in the reign of Henry VIII Sinfraed and Synefraid (St. Ffraid).

(There is also near the church the well of Llansanffraid, commonly called St. Freide’s well.)

The following are instances of the mutation of B and F.

Frater Brother. Pater Father. Bride Ffraid.

We find the following in *Liber Landavensis*: “The church at Bridstow—Llansanffreit—was consecrated in the year 1066 by Herwald, Bishop of Llandaff. It is dedicated to St. Bridget, an Irish Saint whose Celtic name was St. Freit or St. Fraid, but was known to the Saxons as St. Bride or St. Bridget.”

St. Brahid (or Ffraid) so named by her parents after the deity whom the ancient Irish revered as the goddess of wisdom and song, was the Virgin of Cil Dara (Kildare) and patroness of Ireland. The *Annales Cambriæ*, the oldest chronicle of Welsh affairs extant, places her birth “Brigida Sancta Nascitur A.D. 454” and her death “Quies Sanctæ Brigidæ A.D. 521.” (Colgan “sets down her birth as 439 and her death as 523.”)

In *Mona Antiqua Restaurata* we find the following:—“Popish legends say that St. Ffraid, an Irish Saint, and a Virgin remarkable for her sanctity, sailed from Ireland to this place (Anglesea) on a green sod, which instantly upon landing became a firm hillock, which was afterwards called ‘Holy-head.’” (Rowlands.)

On the island of Holyhead are still to be found the remains of “Capel San Ffraid,” which was dedicated to her memory;

LEGENDS OF ST. FFRAID

there are several churches in Wales dedicated to this Saint ; she is claimed by, and intimately connected with the Kymry.

“ So famous is the renown of this holy virgin (says Hector Boethius) that the Scots, the Picts, the Irish and those who lived near them, and the English, put her next after the Virgin Mother of God. Churches are named after her throughout the whole world.”

“ Her feast (Stephen White tells us) was celebrated in every cathedral from the Grisons to the German Sea for nearly a thousand years ” (Kildare Arch. Soc. 1894).

Jorwerth Vynglwyd, a Welsh poet of the thirteenth century, wrote of the miracles of St. Bridget in Wales.

Here is a translation from the Welsh :

Swift o'er the sea
The floating island fled,
While glorious rays illumin'd
Her holy head.

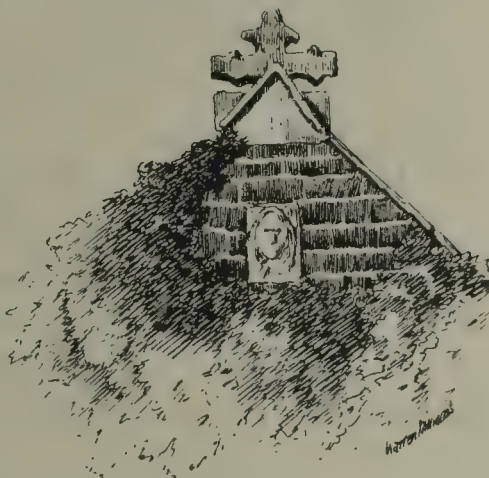
Thou did'st swim over the ocean,
Having the form of God upon thy mantle.

—*Husenbeth's Emblems of Saints.*

At the close of her visit to Cambria, St. Brigid returned to Kildare, and constructed her cell under a great oak tree. From this the future Cathedral “Cil-Dara” (Kildare) took its name, signifying the “Cell of the oak.”

Acorns and oakleaves being the special emblem of St. Bridget, they were largely introduced into the carvings of Kildare Cathedral, and will be found here, in the Sanctuary, and also on the Lectern (which represents her as a nun).

St. Bridget established a Nunnery at Kildare, and her nuns were



CARVING OF THE HEAD OF
A NUN

IN THE MARCH WALL

long celebrated as the guardians of the "Inextinguishable fire." She is herself always represented in Art as an Abbess with a flame of fire over her head, and it is interesting to note the ancient carving of the head of a nun over the porch of Skenfrith church.



ACORNS

Donatus, Bishop of Fiesole, born and educated in Ireland, in A.D. 800 thus wrote of St. Bridget: "If we could number the minutest grains of sand which the troubled waves of the sea had scattered upon our shores, then might we number the virtues

of this Virgin, whose body was the Temple of the Most High God."

THE CHURCH.

"The Lord said :
Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer
that is made in this place.
For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may
be there for ever : and mine eyes and mine heart shall be
there perpetually."

11 Chron. vii. 15, 16.

.

"The place whereon thou standest
is Holy ground."

Under the Altar is a stone slab, which was found under the Minstrels' Pew. It bears a small incised cross in each corner and one in the centre, said to represent the five Sacred Wounds and to have formed the top of the original Altar.

THE LENTEN VEIL.

The projections for the support of the Lenten Veil should be specially noticed. It is a remnant of the old penitential discipline

OBJECTS IN THE CHURCH

which survives in the present custom of covering pictures and images during Lent. The Veil was a large purple curtain which hung from the roof of the Sanctuary to the floor, separating the Sanctuary from the people. It was fixed in position with rings on a rod which was supported on brackets or projections, so that it could be quickly drawn aside. In ancient times it was used from the first Monday in Lent till the reading of the Passion on Wednesday in Holy Week when the words were read—"velum Temple scissum est" (Canon Dolman).

In the Roman Church the Veil is now put up on Passion Sunday and remains till Holy Saturday, when on the "Gloria in excelsis" being intoned and the organ and bells ringing out (having been silent since Maundy Thursday), the Veil is rapidly drawn aside, displaying the Reredos decorated with flowers and disclosing once more the East window (Canon Barron).

* * * *

In the East window have been leaded up some fragments of ancient glass, collected from various windows by a former Vicar. "They date from the 15th century, and seem to indicate that the windows were composed of quarries surrounded by a border of vine. The patterns on the quarries are of varied character. The leaves and fruit of the vine are of white glass, the stem patterned and stained yellow, while the interspaces are of ruby. The whole of the window glazing, which is of beautiful old Crown glass, has been carefully releaded and refixed in position; the work being done on the spot by experienced men" (Professor Tristram).

THE CHALICE AND PATEN.

"And he toke the cuppe and dide thankwngis, and zaf to hem and seide 'drynke ze alle herof.'"

Matthew xxvi. 27. (Wycliffe version) 1324.

IN THE MARCH WALL

The Chalice and Paten are interesting and bear the following marks :—



CHALICE AND PATEN

Arms : Shield with three storks,
Crowned Leopard,
Lion passant,
Q “ black letter small.”

Mr. Cripps on *Old English Plate* says :—

“ Between 1600 and 1630 the Cup is often found shaped like a ‘ U ’ supported by a Baluster stem.” He gives an engraving of the Chalice in which King Charles I received his last Communion on the morn-

ing of his execution. (This historical relic was made in 1629 and is preserved at Welbeck. The Skenfrith Chalice is almost identical in shape with the chalice depicted in this engraving.)

“ Sometimes initial letters were used as workers’ marks. Symbols and emblems accompanied by initial letters hardly ever occur later than the commencement of the seventeenth century. The examination of a great number of specimens of that century, has given us not more than a dozen such marks, pieces down to 1692 being the very last ; except the mark of the three storks (found in 1685) there is nothing of the kind later than 1661.”

Mr. Cripps writes :—“ Your Chalice and Paten are 1693, for certain.”

They must therefore have been presented to the Church in the 14th year of “ Jacobus Phillips Vicarius de Sconfroth.”

A Fair White Linen Cloth, bearing the date, 4th June 1775.

OBJECTS IN THE CHURCH

THE PISCINA.

The Piscina in the Chancel is interesting ; its date is about the middle of the 13th century and although it belongs to the period of pointed architecture, it is semi-circular headed (Professor Tristram).

The semi-circular arch was rarely used after the 12th century, but one occasionally finds it at a later date.

Inside the Chancel rails to the right, is the grave of "Jacobi Phillippes of Bergavenny Vicarius de Skonfroth" who was presented to the living by Phillip Cecile. In 1681, while Phillippes was Vicar, the restoration of the church, which had been begun by his predecessor Lewis Parry, was finished, the Chalice and Paten being probably presented during his incumbency. Phillippes died in 1725, aged 78 years, having been Vicar for 46 years. He is buried with his wife and two daughters, both christened in the church. The united ages of the four amount to 329 years. His entries in the Register were made in Latin.

THE SANCTUARY CARVING.

(Executed and presented by the wife of the late Patron in memory of their grandson.)

The five large panels are of Decorative Gothic tracery of the fifteenth century, of French design, and are copied from the originals in the South Kensington Museum.

The five smaller panels are adapted from carvings in Oppenheim Cathedral and are also of the same date.

The "bosses" are emblematic, and represent the history of the church, as follows :—

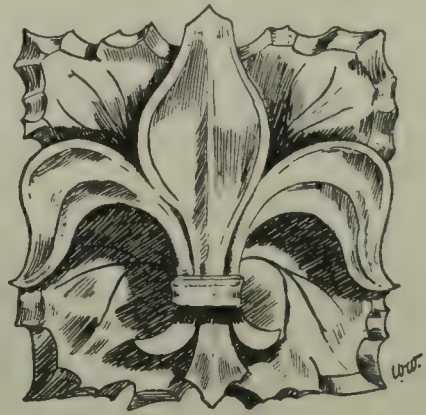
Oakleaves and acorns. The badge of Sanffraid or St. Bridget, to whom the Church is dedicated.

IN THE MARCH WALL

The Fleur-de-lis (The Flower of the Blessed Virgin Mary). This device was borne by the Princes of the Kingdom of Gwent (of which Monmouthshire formed a part), and gave place later



BOSSSES IN SANCTUARY:
BADGE OF ST. BRIDGET



FLEUR-DE-LYS

to the three feathers which are now used by the Prince of Wales.

This lily will also be found embroidered on the Cope.



SINGLE ROSE OF
LANCASTER



TUDOR ROSE

The Single Rose of Lancaster. The living was for centuries in the gift of the Lords of Skenfrith, who were Dukes of Lancaster.

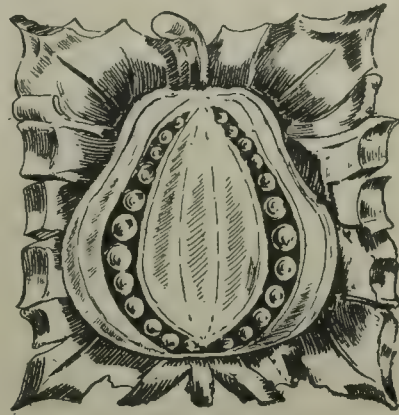
OBJECTS IN THE CHURCH

Henry de Grosmont, the first Duke of Lancaster, was born at Grosmont Castle, close to Skenfrith.

The Tudor Rose. The white within the red. York and Lancaster combined under Henry VII and Elizabeth of York, both of whom were descended from Lords of Skenfrith.

The Pomegranate. Also embroidered on the Cope, from the Royal Arms of Spain, possibly introduced by Constantia Princess of Spain and second wife of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster and Lord of Skenfrith.

The present Lectern represents Saint Bridget with her emblems—the acorn, the sacred lamp, and the floating sod of turf.



POMEGRANATE

It is the work of Mr. Richard Jack, R.A., and is placed here

In loving Memory
of

Leyton Pershouse Thomas
1889 to 1906.

“With ME in Paradise.”

THE READING DESK.

Forming the front of the present reading desk is a portion of the ancient Rood screen. It is of oak and bears no traces of colour, decoration or carving. It is, however, roughly pierced by holes in the form of tracery, and one in the form of a Cross. These were no doubt used as Hagioscopes, or Squints, enabling those members of the congregation by whom it could not otherwise be seen, to view the elevation of the Host.

IN THE MARCH WALL

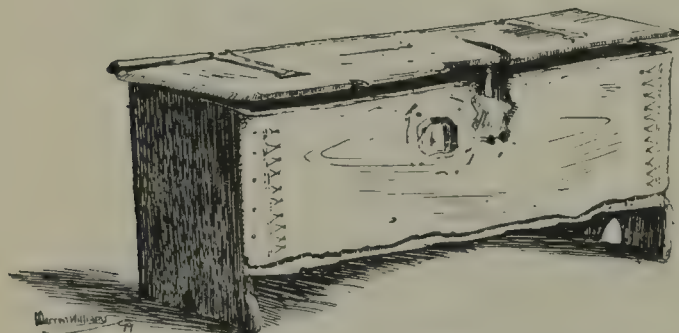
THE FONT.

There seems to have been a restoration of the church in the reign of Charles II. The south aisle was finished in 1661 and a new Font was added at the same time—not an uncommon date for Fonts, as the Puritans broke up so many (Mrs. Bagnall Oakeley). This one was situated to the west of the north arcade and was removed to its present position in 1876, the old foundation being discovered at the relaying of the floors (Mr. Weir). The initials of the churchwardens and the date are carved on one side. The vicar Lewis Parry, was appointed by the Commissioners of Cromwell on the recommendation of John Morgan of the Wayne “together with the testimony of his good and holy conversation.”

THE MINSTRELS' PEW.

This is a restoration. The original was removed by a former vicar when he took away the square pews (leaving only the Morgan pew) and re-seated the church with modern deal, which was replaced by the present oak seats in 1910.

During the reparation of the church, the stone steps leading to the Rood Loft were discovered in the south pier of the Chancel arch, in the thickness of the wall, commencing about three feet above the floor level (Mr. Weir).



PARISH HUTCH (ABOUT 1600)

THE PARISH HUTCH.

Parish Chests.

There are two parish chests, one now without a lid, which had three locks: this is considered the older of the two, and about 1600.

The second is intact, having two locks only (Professor Tristram).

Before the Reformation in every church was placed a “Poor man’s box.” Poor boxes were very often mentioned in the twelfth

POORE MAN'S BOXES

century. At that period Pope Innocent III ordered "hollow trunks" to be placed in all churches "to receive alms for the remission of sins of the donors" (Tyac, *Eccles. Curiosities*).

The Synod of Exeter in 1287, ordered that every parish should provide a chest or "hutch" for books and vestments, and in 1571 it was required by canon "That the church-wardens in every parish shall, at the costs and charges of the parish, provide a sure coffer with two locks and keys, for the safe keeping of the register book, and a strong chest or box for the 'Almose' of the poor, with three locks and keys to the same, whereof one shall remain with the minister, and the other two with the church-wardens severally" (Fosbrook, *Antiquities*).

Few church chests of any interest date from the Jacobean period. Plain and deal boxes were then held good enough for the purpose of the "Church Hutch."

In 1587 the poet Churchyard wrote:—

" In poore man's boxe
Who doeth his treasure lay
Shall finde againe
Ten folde, for one he leaves ;
Or els my hope
And knowledge me deceives."

MURAL PAINTINGS.

(By Professor Tristram.)

The plastering of the walls and roofs has been carefully repaired and colour-washed. In the process several wall-paintings were uncovered ; but, owing to the friable condition of the plaster, and the hardness and number of coats of lime-wash covering them, it was found possible to uncover certain portions only.

The whole surface of the east wall of the nave and both aisles appears to have been painted ; but unfortunately it was found impossible to remove the limewash without destroying the painting,

IN THE MARCH WALL

so it was allowed to remain in its original condition. Over the chancel arch there were traces of what was originally, in all probability, a "Doom" or "Last Judgment" underneath a later coat of plaster. This too it was found impossible to reveal, owing to the perished condition of the ancient plastering.

On the north wall of the north aisle are two fragments of mediæval painting, in bright colours, yellow, vermilion and black. It is again impossible to decipher the subject, but on one traces of a nimbus are still perceptible.

Of those fragments which it was found possible to uncover, the earliest is probably that round the window in the east wall of the



THE PRIESTS' DOOR,
CHANTRY CHAPEL

south aisle. It is impossible to make out the subject of the painting, but there appears to be the lower part of a demon, a cask and a wheel. It is conceivable that it might have formed part of a rendering of "The Seven Deadly Sins," or "The Torments of the Damned."

It is curious that it should in certain features correspond with the legend referred to on p. 78, and there is a remote possibility that its existence, if perchance it remained exposed after the

general destruction of images, may have given rise to this interesting Skenfrith tradition. This concludes all the traces of mediæval painting; but there are a considerable number of examples of later painting, better preserved if less interesting from the subject point of view. The most perfect of these are the Ten Commandments which are written in black letter text, on either side of the east window in the chancel. They are enclosed in a meandering foliated border which is continued over the head of the window, the spandrels being filled in with a large leaf. Probably they were placed there whilst Roger ap Rosser was Vicar in the latter part of the sixteenth century.

MEDIÆVAL MURAL PAINTING

On the east wall of the Chantry Chapel, on the south side of the Chancel, there is a fragment of an all-over scroll pattern, of similar date, painted in a deep Indian red colour. It is partly covered by a later painting of the Lord's Prayer in black within a border.

Painted above the nave arcade, and facing the south aisle, is the following text :—" Keep thy foot when thou goest to ye house of God and be more ready to hear than to give ye sacrifice of fools." Eccl., vi. It is surrounded by a richly painted frame of foliage, and probably dates from the restoration of the aisle, which took place in 1661. On the east wall, in the same aisle, covering the more ancient painting, are traces of a similar text.

Fragmentary though most of this painting may be, there is still justification for attaching considerable value to it. It is one link in the chain which goes to prove that all our ancient churches were at one time resplendent in colour and bore on their walls Scripture history, the lives of the saints, doctrine conveyed by means of allegory, and in later days texts from the Bible written and arranged with a natural sense of fitness and beauty, crying shame on similar efforts of the last century which can only be regarded as desecrations.

In many of the neighbouring churches there are traces of similar remains, and it is true to say that for every one which has been preserved, large numbers must have been destroyed in drastic restorations.

Some conception of the nature of the Skenfrith paintings in their original condition might be gathered from a visit to Kempley, a short distance over the border in Gloucestershire, where the chancel, with its painted walls, vaulting, and window splays, is a complete and magnificent example of this great English mediæval art.

IN THE MARCH WALL

THE SKENFRITH COPE.

“ Long faded glories
That had been glorious,
in another day.”

“The returned Crusaders, Prince-Bishops, Bishops, Mitred Abbots, and other dignitaries of the church exercised considerable influence over the ritual of the Roman and Anglican Churches. They introduced ideas of Eastern magnificence and splendour, both of the dignitaries and also of the inferior clergy.”

“They originated chiefly the cross and crucifix decorations which adorned the altar, and altar vestments of the ministers.”

“The plain white surplice was embroidered with crosses, the purple chasuble was adorned with precious stones, and the gorgeous scarlet copes of cloth of gold, rivalled the splendid robes of Royalty, and excited the jealousy of Princes and Kings.”

In the inventory of Lincoln Cathedral under the title of “red chasubles and copes” is found—

“A chasuble of red cloth of gold with orphreys (stripes and borders) before and behind, set with pearls, blue, white and red, with plates of gold enamelled, and two tunicles of the same suit, with orphreys of cloth of gold—a chasuble of red bardkin with orphreys of gold, with leopards powdered with black trifodes, two tunicles and three albes of the same suit with all the apparel, the gift of the Duchesse Blaunche of Lancaster” [Lady of Skenfrith and daughter of Henry of Grosmont, first Duke of Lancaster] (Revd. W. A. Darby, *Church Vestments*).

In the first Prayer Book of Edward VI the celebrant at the Holy Communion was ordered to wear a vestment or cope.

Rubric in Prayer Book 1549—

“For the Priest that shall execute the Holy Ministry”—the vestment appointed for that ministration, that is to say, a white albe plain, with a vestment or cope (Mrs. Bagnall Oakeley).

Of the Skenfrith Cope, the Revd. Father Abbott writes in 1897:—



THE SKENFRITH COPE

THE SKENFRITH COPE

“ I wish I could give you any history of the venerable old Cope I made all enquiry about 50 years ago, when I found it rotting in the damp on the Communion Table in the Skenfrith Parish Church, but no one could tell me anything about it, where it came from, or how long it had been there.

“ I offered to give the churchwardens a new cover for the Table if they would let me take the old one away, as it was in rags from touching the damp wall. They were quite willing but found they had not the power, but would write to the Dean for his consent, and he asked for a further description of the Cope. At that time Mr. Welby Pugin had become a Catholic and began to draw attention to these remains of Catholic times, which had escaped destruction at the hands of the Reformers.

“ Soon after—the Archæological meeting was held for the first time at Grosmont, and the Dean (Merewether of Hereford) sent for the Cope, and recognised what it had been, and on its return to Skenfrith orders were given to take every care of it, and not to let it rot in the damp.

“ This caused no little talk amongst Skenfrith people to know more about it, and as the Vicar was a very low Churchman in his views, he told the people that it had been a ‘ Coat of King John’s ’ (the story in the neighbourhood goes, that King John signed the ‘ Magna Carta ’ in this coat in 1215).

“ All Catholic vestments at the change of religion under Henry VIII and Elizabeth, were destroyed. The old Cope was no doubt preserved and concealed by the last Catholic Governor of Skenfrith Castle, John Morgan, whose monument you have in the aisle ; it has been cut and mutilated, but for what purpose does not appear, unless it was reduced to its present size after the Reformation, when it was made into a cover for the Communion Table.

“ The old vestment Father Moore showed you at the Roman Catholic church in Monmouth, came from Holywell. I found the pieces of this vestment in a box concealed in the attics at Monmouth, about the year 1837, and contrived to put them together again,

IN THE MARCH WALL

such as you see it now. It was obliged to be cut into small pieces to prevent its being recognised as a vestment, for the possession of anything Catholic, in those days of severe penal laws against Catholics, would have been sufficient evidence to cause their being put to a cruel death." (The nuns of the Franciscan Nunnery at Taunton, were intrusted with the restoration of this vestment.)

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It has been suggested that the Skenfrith Cope may be the work of the nuns of the Convent at "Hell's Bridge, Garroway" (Garroway), and also that it might have been embroidered by the members of the Morgan family.

* * *

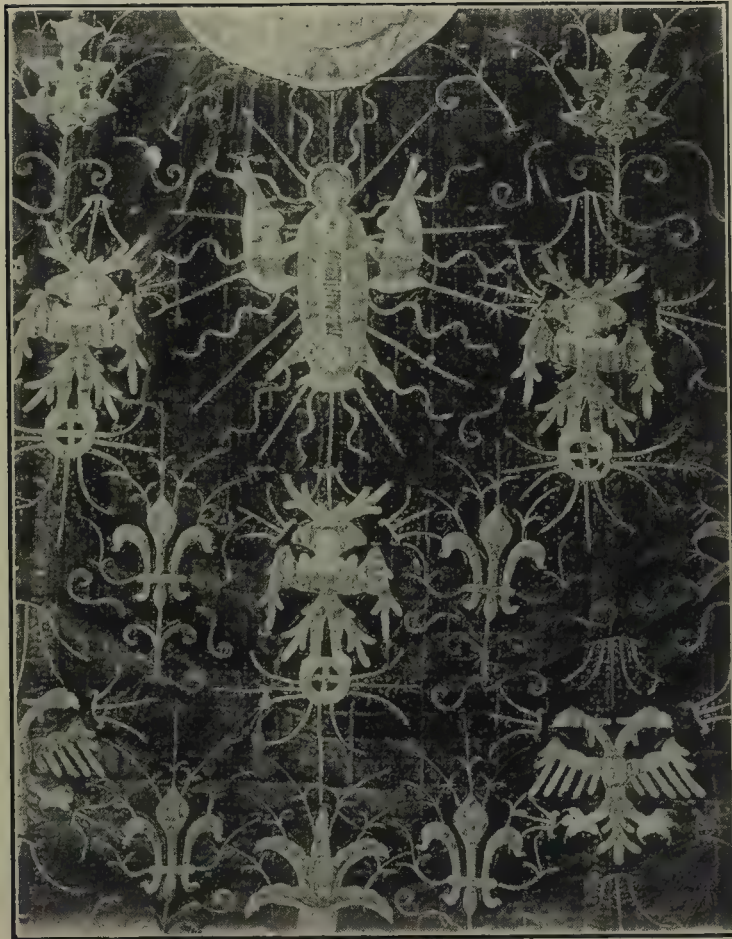
From A. B. Skinner, Esq., South Kensington Science and Art Dept.:

Velvet Cope belonging to Skenfrith Church, Monmouthshire.

"An interesting example of English embroidery of the fifteenth century. The different parts of the pattern were first worked in coloured silks and silver gilt threads on canvas, and afterwards applied to the velvet. In the centre is the Virgin Mary, borne aloft by three angels. On either side is a Seraph, and another is represented below. The rest of the Cope is covered with floral devices—the fleur-de-lys and the pomegranate and double-headed eagles.

"On the hood is a seated figure of the Virgin holding the Infant Saviour. The orphreys are embroidered with standing figures of Saints, under canopies. Next to the hood on the right side, is the figure of St. Andrew; the others are too much worn to be identified with any certainty. Specimens of English Copes are so seldom found in an un mutilated state, that it might be suggested that this most interesting relic of pre-reformation times should be preserved with the greatest care. Perhaps it could be kept under glass.

"May I ask if it would be possible for the Museum to have a



SECTION OF THE SKENFRITH COPE

DECORATION OF THE COPE

copy of the photograph?" (This was sent, and after the restoration of the church, the Cope was put into a glass case.)

* * *

From *Arch. Cambrensis*, 1909 :

"It is the technical perfection and beauty of the needlework of this Cope, which was done with coloured silks and silver and gold thread, that determines the period of its workmanship.

Some lightness and relief were given to the work by introducing here and there, or extending from the leaves, tendrils or radiating lines, of thicker gold thread, dotted with spangles.

Figures of angelic beings, with three pairs of wings, form part of the decoration. These angels are represented as standing upon wheels, as suggested by Ezekiel's vision of the Cherubim. They are six-winged, like Isaiah's vision :

"Each one had six wings ; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly."—Isaiah vi. 2.

* * *

"Then did the Cherubims lift up their wings and the wheels beside them, and the glory of the God of Israel was over them, and when they went, I heard the noise of their wings like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty. The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the colour of a beryl, as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel—as the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord—and when I saw it, I fell upon my face."—Ezek. i.

IN THE MARCH WALL

SCONFROTH NEWE SIX BELLES

15th January 1765.

Bell thou soundest merrily,
Tellest thou at evening
Bedtime draweth nigh;
Bell thou soundest mournfully,
Tellest thou the bitter
Parting hath gone by.
Say, how canst thou mourn,
How canst thou rejoice?
Thou art but metal dull,
And yet all our sorrowings,
And all our rejoicings,
Thou dost feel them all!

LONGFELLOW.

* * *

An interesting extract from the church register records that "Sconfreth the newe six belles first began to ring 15th of January 1765."

The inscriptions on the bells are as follows:—

Treble	"When you us ring We'll sweetly sing."
1st	"The living to the Church I call And to the grave will summon all."
2nd	"The Reverend Mr. Davies and Joseph Hosten Churchwardens 1764."
3rd	"Thomas Rudhall cast us all in 1764."
4th & Tenor	"T. R. 1764."

Amongst the best known bell founders of the day was Abraham Rudhall of Gloucester, who was established there in 1684. Half a century later a statement was issued, showing that down to Lady Day 1774 the Rudhall family had turned out 3,594 bells, including

KNIGHTS OF THE RED CROSS

one in Westminster Abbey (in 1743). They cast the great tenor bell at Ross in 1693 for John Kyrle the "Man of Ross." Old records tell how Kyrle went over to Rudhall's Foundry at Gloucester to see his bell cast, taking with him an old silver tankard, which, after drinking to King and Church, he threw into the molten metal. Through the remainder of his life the bell tolled forth, but shortly after his death in 1724 it fell and was destroyed—a strange coincidence.

Pope Gregory IX in 1227 directed the ringing of an evening bell as a call to prayer on behalf of the Crusaders. This would find a loyal response at Skenfrith, who numbered among the lords of her castle several of those Red Cross Knights, while from the Templar Church at Garway, as night crept on, there came floating down the



DOVECOTE TOWER

valley the shrill voice of their treble bell, which was rung by one of the Brothers, as a guide for all wayfarers to their house, where

“ Each passing pilgrim and each beggar's right
Was food, and rest, and shelter, for the night.”

The ringing of the “Curfew” was a necessary precaution against fire which the prevalence of wooden buildings made only

IN THE MARCH WALL

too probable, and which all history shows to have been one of the scourges of the period.

The voice of the bell was invoked to add solemnity to the most dreadful form of the Church's excommunication, as in the case of King John (he was patron of Skenfrith church), who was excommunicated in 1208 by Pope Innocent III.

In "kynge Johon" of Bishop Bale these lines occur :

"For as moch as kynge Johon doeth Holy Church soe handel,
Here I doe curse hym, wythe crosse, boke, belle an candel,
I take hym from Cryste, an after the sownd of this belle,
Both bodie an sowl, I geve hym to the devyll of helle."

(The bell used at excommunication was a hand bell.)

"No doubt the predecessors of the 'Skonfroth newe six belles' had been destroyed or stolen by Thomas Cromwell (acting as Vicar-general for Henry VIII), who had orders to take away all bells from the churches, leaving only one in each steeple which was to be 'the least in the ring.' The King sold in 1536 to a London citizen 100,000 pounds weight of bell metal for £900, giving the buyer leave to export it. At a later date exportation was forbidden, not from any scruple of conscience, but lest there should be 'lack of material in the country for the casting of cannon.' This traffic in church bells was checked by Edward VI and Elizabeth, though it was not entirely stopped" (Rev. I. Tyac, *Bells*).

In the last year of Edward VI (1553), information having been given to the Council that most of the church furniture and ornaments which had hitherto escaped spoliation, might now be well appropriated to the King's use, commissioners were appointed to act under Sir John Scudamore (of Kentchurch). The plate and jewels of Herefordshire amounted in value to about £1,213 1s. 3d. and the weight of bell metal is given as 9 tons 6 cwt. 28 lb.—worth £190 5s. od.

COUVRE FEU

<i>Bells taken :</i>	Corse-bell	}	For Funerals.
	Herse-bell		
	Liege-bell (or lick-bell)		
	Sacring-bell (rung at the elevation of the Host)		
	Sacrament or saunce-bell		
	Tynacle		

The commissioners direct that one of the two larger bells be left.

The order of things is reversed now, for the “twenty-two guns which the Germans took in the Franco-Prussian war in 1870 were made into one great bell called ‘Gloriosa,’ which was raised with much ceremony to the tower of Cologne Cathedral” (Phillott, *Diocesan Hist.*).

Hooper, Bishop of Gloucester, in his visitation book 1551, reckons the “ringing of the Sanctus bell among forbidden rites and ordered them not only to be disused, but destroyed. From henceforth (he enjoins) in no parish in this diocese shall any bells be rung, but before service, as well in the morning as in the evening, but not on Saturdays or any other holy days, or at evening to ‘Couvre feu’—yet many traditions of evening ringings still survive in different parts of the country. At the Reformation ‘the knolling of the Aves’ (the Angelus) was forbidden, but the attempt to entirely suppress the ringing was not successful.

“For some time a muffled peal was rung each year on January the 30th, in memory of King Charles I, and we find that David Lewis, who was inducted as vicar of Skenfrith in 1613, was afterwards dismissed and prosecuted for loyalty to Charles, and his successor in 1642 ‘suffered in like manner to his predecessor’” (Rev. I. Tyac, *Bells*).

In case of fire, church bells were rung backwards.

“When backwards rung we tell of fire
Think how the world shall thus expire”

is engraved on one of the bells of St. Ives, and on another,

“I put the plague to flight.”

IN THE MARCH WALL

Our own sweet bells, mellow from the dust of centuries, are silent six days of the seven, saving for the merry wedding peal, or the mournful tolling of the "soul bell" for one passed into the mysterious land of the hereafter.

THE BELLS WERE REHUNG
JANUARY 7, 1911,
IN REMEMBRANCE OF
LEYTON THOMAS.

THE USES OF CHURCH BELLS

Old Monkish distichs :

"Laudo Deum verum, plebem voco, congreco clerum,
Defunctos ploro, pestem fugo, festa decoro."

"Funera plango, fulgura frango, sabbata pango,
Excito lentos, dissipo ventos, paco cruentos."

* * *

Local "Bell Jingles" (From *Folklore of Herefordshire*, Mrs. Leather).

Be good to the poor
Say the bells of Abbey Dore.

Be as good as you can
Say the bells of Bacton.

Buttermilk and whey
Say the bells of Garway.

Down in the lurch
Say the bells of Kentchurch.

Cracknuts and barnuts (walnuts)
Say the bells of St. Weonards.

DESCRIPTION OF A TOMB

THE TOMB OF JOHN MORGAN OF THE WAEN

There is a fine altar tomb in the north aisle, to the memory of John Morgan of the Waen, and Ann his wife. The effigies on the tomb are in low relief, and are well worthy of notice, as showing every detail in the costume of the period at which they were executed. On the top are the figures of the man and wife; on the south side are four men, probably the four sons; and in the corner of each panel a conical hat. On the north side are four women, in the elaborate dress of the day, lace ruffs, farthingale



TOMB OF JOHN MORGAN

and stomacher—every little detail given. At the head, and on a chevron between three heads argent, are two red roses, slipped and gleaved proper, doubtless in allusion to his office of "Receiver to the Duchy of Lancaster." At the foot are the arms of the Cecils of Alteryne (to which family his wife belonged), many of whom were patrons and vicars of the church for generations.

In the reign of Henry VIII Philip Morgan was "seated at Y Waen," a curious old mansion in a sheltered part of Skenfrith parish. It is of interest as being an early house built in the sixteenth century; its chief architectural feature is the tower which forms

IN THE MARCH WALL

the centre of it. Philip Morgan was living in 1530, and his son, to whom the tomb was erected, was Steward of the Duchy of Lancaster and the last Governor of the "Three Castles" (Gros-mont, Skenfrith, and White Castles). He was member of Parliament for the Monmouthshire Boroughs in 1553 and 1554, during which time most important events in our history took place (Col. Sir Joseph Bradney, C.B., *Hist. of Monmouthshire*).

On the 10th day of July 1553 Lady Jane Grey, grand-daughter of Henry VII, to whom Edward VI left the crown by will, "a pure minded and intelligent girl of sixteen," was proclaimed Queen in London, only to be deposed ten days later, when she passed from the throne to prison, and to death.

No doubt John Morgan was present on the 19th of July at Mary's coronation when "Viscount Hereford and Lord Bergavenny kissed the Queen's cheek for homage of the Lords Marchers."

The only measures opposed in Mary's first Parliament were relating to her marriage with Philip of Spain, when their Speaker and twenty of their number went to petition "that the Queen would not marry a stranger nor a foreigner." Mary's indignation at the interference of the House caused its dissolution. A Parliament was called the next year, which gave its consent to the marriage, but would not pass the bill "for the persecution of heretics." In both of these Parliaments John Morgan took his seat, and gave his vote, although himself a Roman Catholic.

England had never before been ruled by a Queen, and Mary ruled with a rod of iron, but she was a sorrowful woman and died five years later, sad, lonely, and deserted by her husband (Strickland, *Queens of England*).

John Morgan's experiences of life were unique: the pomp and show connected with Royal births, marriages, and deaths were of frequent occurrence, and many important events were crowded into his life. He saw the birth and coronation of one King and two Queens: Edward VI, Lady Jane Grey (for ten days) and Mary; and the death of two Kings, Henry VIII and Edward VI.

SIR RICHARD MORGAN OF BLACKBROOKE

He was a contemporary of Mary Queen of Scots, and during his life there were no less than eight Queens of England (including the six wives of Henry VIII). John Morgan died at his residence at the Waen in 1557. He was patron of this church, and the advowson remained in his family for generations. Sir Richard Morgan of Blackbrooke was his brother. He was called to the Bar in 1529, and was Recorder of Gloucester in 1546. He was returned as member for that city in both Parliaments of Edward VI. He does not appear to have made much progress as an advocate; perhaps the fact of his being a Catholic was against him. He was attached to the Princess Mary, and in 1551 was committed to the Fleet Prison for hearing mass in her Chapel. He always upheld the cause of Mary, and had his reward on her accession, being made Chief Justice of the Common Pleas.

He tried Lady Jane Grey, who pleaded Guilty, and was sentenced by him to be burned alive on Tower Hill; or to be beheaded, as the Queen (Mary) should direct.

His removal from the Bench before his death, gives weight to the story that he became insane from the bitter remembrance of the dreadful sentence he had pronounced on Lady Jane Grey; and that in his raving he asked continually to have her taken away from him (*Foss' Judges of England*). In his will dated 11th March 1546 Sir Richard left 6s. 8d. to the reparation of Skenfrith Church and 5s. to the Chapel of St. Noyes at Blackbrooke.

Depositions, Duchy of Lancaster. 16 James I (1619):

“The Attorney General versus Philip Morgan, Holm Lands.”
(See p. 11.)

The handsomely carved stone which formerly covered Philip Morgan's grave in the north aisle is now in the porch.

An entry in the Register, “Philip Morgan an An his wife married October 12 1661” (probably son of the above).

In 1654, Lewis Parry was appointed to the living of Skenfrith (then called “Rectory”) by the commissioners of Cromwell, on the recommendation of John Morgan of the Waen, Patron, “together

IN THE MARCH WALL

with the testimony of his good and holy conversation" (*Liber Institutionum*).

In 1679 Father William Morgan of Blackbrooke was attached to the Jesuit College of St. Xavier and held the lease of the Cwm (near Skenfrith) from the Marquis of Worcester.

For more than 200 years after there are entries in the registers of the Morgans of the Waen and the Morgans of Blackbrooke.

THE MORGAN PEW

Close to the tomb is the old pew of the Morgan family, very handsomely carved in the Jacobean style, and of the square shape used at that period (Mrs. Bagnall Oakeley).

In a list given of the tenements of each parish of those liable to pay heriots we find under that of Grosmont :—

"Robert, Earl of Salisbury, holdeth one tenement and lands."
1607.

THE REGISTERS

"The first mandate for keeping registers of baptisms, marriages and burials in each parish was issued in 1538 by Thomas Cromwell as Vicar-general. This was repeated in more vigorous terms on the accession of Elizabeth, and it was ordained in 1597 that parchment register books should be purchased at the expense of each parish, and that all the names from the older books should be therein transcribed from 1558. Hence it happens that so many parish registers begin with that year. Many parishes lost their early registers, and they are usually deficient or wanting during the Commonwealth.

"The following extract from Kibworth registers tersely gives the reason for these usual deficiencies :—

"A.D. 1641. Know all men, that the reason why little or nothing is registered from the year 1641 until the year 1649 was the civil war between King Charles and his Parliament, which put all into a confusion, and neither minister nor people could quietly stay at home, for the one party or the other."

A NURSE'S ERROR

“ Official enquiries were made of all the clergy in 1831 as to the exact date, condition and number of the parish registers in their custody, and abstracts of their replies were published in a Blue Book in 1833 ” (Dr. Cox, *How to Write the History of a Parish*).

The early Skenfrith registers are incomplete ; only portions of them now remain.

This is the first record :

Baptisms

“ John et Johanna gemelli filius
et filia Thomas — Bap. 19 die
Sep A.D. 1639.”

“ Et dicta Johanna una Gemella,
Sepulta 26th die Sep—1639.”

In 1856 we find a curious entry among the baptisms : James Alfred, a girl, baptised by mistake of the nurse, goes by the name of Sarah Ann.

.

Most of the marriages are entered thus, the bride's maiden name not being given :

“ Philip Morgan of Blackbrook an An his wife
Married October 12 1661.”

“ Philip Hughs an Lizaboth his wife
joined in matrimony. June 21 1661.”

1753. “ Newe Stile.”

(Previously to September 1752 the civil or legal year in this country commenced on 25 March, while the historical year began on 1 January. Thus the period between 1 January and 24 March was assignable to different years according to the system adopted by the different writers, and might be expressed thus : 1 February 1752-3.)

IN THE MARCH WALL

Among the deaths the words :

“ Popor,” “ porpor,” “ paupor,”

constantly occur between the years 1701 and 1790.*

“ 1669 Phillippe Bodenham *Recusant* ”
(of Blackbrooke).

(A “ Recusant ” was one, especially a Roman Catholic, who refused to attend church. Upon conviction, besides liable to other penalties, a recusant was subject to the disabilities of excommunication.)

.

The following is an extract from the Registers :

7

1645 *Arday 37* *Jo: et rof*
Missonnd } *Pr*
19 die

FROM THE REGISTER

- 1695. Tosf Williams of ye glory hole.
- 1728. Old Hugh y loder to y Mill buried.
- 1763. Old Jane buryde.
- 1763. Thomas y son of Thomas Morgan of
By and By Buryde.

* Dr. Cox writes : “ These words are highly exceptional, and the extract from the registers very interesting and puzzling.”

FROM THE REGISTERS

1763. Judeith y Ginger bred maker.
Fifth of y sade yeare old Mary.
1769. George George buryde.
1771. Jon Poco (Prosser ?) buryde.
1825. John Probyn upwards of sixty years
Clerk of this Parish, aged 85.
1850. Thomas Edwards, Clerk of this
parish, aged 82.

IN THE MARCH WALL

“ GOD’S ACRE ”

“ Lowly grief and lordly pride,
Rest here together.”

Up the old worn steps and into God’s Acre. Here,

“ When the shadows are lengthening
Over the waving grass
And the gates of the sunset are open,
For the dying day to pass ;

When the mountains are fading
And the voices of singing cease,
And the twilight gracious and tender,
Is filling the valley with peace.”—Anon.

Here in perfect peacefulness and rest, we can sit and look into the past—so long past—when Skenfrith laid her dead to rest.

“ Those mighty dead
That erst were chiefs and warriors bold ”

who here

“ Laid down their dinted shields.”

Scarcely a stone’s throw away, the castle “ frowns with all its battlements.” Over the “ keep ” a huge black flag is floating to show that the obsequies of the Lord of the castle are being solemnised. All around is a scene of busy commotion. Saxon, Latin, Norman-French are heard on every side, and Skenfrith is *en fête*. Such a funeral means hospitality, of which all wayfarers whatsoever are invited to partake. Mendicants assemble by the score ; Saxon minstrels, Welsh bards and wandering palmers move to and fro, while priests are muttering prayers for the soul of the departed.

At length the drawbridge falls (for then “ the river Monē did goe about the castel dyk ”), and the great gates are flung open to let the warrior out who should come in no more. One by one the heavy tones of the great bell in the church tower fall upon the ear, to die among the hills in distant echo.

OLD-TIME FUNERALS

In solemn file, with crucifix on high, the abbot and the monks of the Abbey of Gr^âce Dieu, to whom the church belongs, pass over the bridge, with folded hands and heads bent low, as they chant the funeral dirge :

“ Through paths unknown,
Thy soul hath flown,
To seek the realms of woe,
Where fiery pain
Shall purge the stain
Of actions done below.
In that sad place
By Marie’s grace
Brief may thy dwelling be,
Till prayers and alms
And holy psalms
Shall set the captive free.”—(SCOTT.)

High on their shoulders the mail clad knights bear out their lord. Over the still form upon the bier is thrown his Templar’s cloak, the blood red cross upon his breast.

Then follow the whole garrison ; the cross-bow men, the freemen and villeins, till the churchyard is crowded.

In which spot did they lay him to rest ? Is this the lid of his stone coffin here in the porch on which we can trace the cross and the sword after all these hundreds of years ?



GOD’S ACRE

What an entirely different spectacle when John Morgan came to his rest in the north aisle, a couple of centuries later. That must have been a sight for Skenfrith ! The long procession winding down the old road from the Waen, where he died. Was he borne

IN THE MARCH WALL

on the shoulders of those four stalwart sons depicted on his tomb in their doublet and hose, embroidered cloaks and conical hats? Did his four daughters follow in their state carriage in the elaborate costumes in which they are also represented—lace ruff, farthingale and stomacher? Every little detail given!

There would be mourning at the Dyffryn, for Dame Morgan



THE MONK

was a Seycyll (Cecil); and at Blackbrooke, for Sir Richard ap Morgan had lost a brother; mourners from both houses would swell the crowd at Norton Cross, and Skenfrith would turn out in its best to meet them.

No warrior he ! but a Statesman, and a powerful man, who had sat in Mary's Parliament and had had the courage to vote against

THOUGHTS OF THE PAST

her persecution of "heretics" (Protestants) although himself a Roman Catholic.

He was the last Governor of the three Castles. Is his sword of office by his side, or on his breast the badge of the Red Rose of Lancaster? for he was Steward of the Duchy. Did the priests wear the gorgeous vestments—we have the cope still—which some say



A RUSTIC SEAT

was embroidered long before by the ladies of his family for the church of which he and others of his kin were patrons.

All these thoughts come to one, but seven hundred years give great scope for the imagination, and one might dream for ever! In these later years each family has its own sacred spot, and life-long friends lie side by side. The headstones show how seldom a stranger has come to wait with them "Till the day break and the shadows flee away."

IN THE MARCH WALL

God's garden of sleep has a thousand sacred memories, for sooner or later the music of every heart must have its minor chord, and,

“ There is no fireside, howsoe'er defended,
But has one vacant chair.”

“ Nothing is our own, except our dead.”

Close by the gate and under the great yew's sable shade stood the village stocks, which some of the old folk still remember. A rustic seat now fills this place of durance vile, and the murmur of the river over the weir and the scent of the flowers from the grave gardens bring forgetfulness and peace.

“ A place where all things mournful meet,
And yet the sweetest of the sweet,
The stillest of the still.”

SKENFRITH'S RECORD IN THE GREAT WAR 1914-1918

They went with songs to the battle ;
They were young, straight of limb,
True of eye, steady and aglow,
They were staunch to the end
Against odds uncounted,
And they fell
With their faces to the foe.

CAPT. W. G. WALFORD	...	Royal Air Force.
*CAPT. ROBIN THOMAS	...	R.A.F., Croix de Guerre.
*CAPT. VINCENT THOMAS	...	R.A.F.
*LIEUT. TREVOR THOMAS	...	R. Welsh Fusiliers.
LIEUT. ARTHUR MARDON	...	2nd Cape Corps, S.A.
SERGT. A. JONES	...	Welsh Regt.
CORPL. H. LAWRENCE	...	Worcestershire Regt., M.G.S.
CORPL. H. VAUGHAN	...	2nd Mon. Regt.

Keep my name in “ Remembrance.”

* For whom this book was written.

PRAYERS FOR DEPARTED SOULS

THE CHANTRY CHAPEL OF ST. NOË (OR NOYSE) AT BLACKBROOKE

The immediate neighbourhood of Skenfrith was a stronghold of Catholicity. The Dominicans, or Black Friars, were brought to England by John de Monmouth (a lord of Skenfrith) in 1221. "They were called Black Monks from the colour of their habit, which was a black loose coat of stuff reaching to their heels with a cowl or hood of the same and a scapular; and under the coat another habit, as large as the former, made of white flannen, and bootes on their legs" (*Notitia Monastica*, 1695). These monks had a "cell" at Llangua, near Grosmont, subordinate to the Abbey of Lira in Normandy, and it is said that there were monks of their order at Blackbrooke who served the Chapel of St. Noyse, or St. Noë, and so gave their name to the place, "Black Friar's brook."

On account of fast days, the monks chose a locality where fish were abundant. The brook used to be known as a good trout stream, and in a tracing taken from a drawing at the British Museum (temp. Henry VIII) of the Manor of Blackbrooke it is shown as being considerably larger and more important than it is at present.

About this time the practice began of making bequests for the benefit of the souls departed, the services being performed either in special parts of existing churches, or in separate buildings erected for this purpose, which were called "Chantry Chapels." Foundations of this kind were very numerous, and instances of them were found down to the very eve of the Reformation. The payment for these prayers was sometimes made in kind. De Braose, Lord of Skenfrith, paid the Abbot of Bergavenny tythes of bread, wine, beer, cyder, all manner of fish, flesh, salt, honey, wax, tallow, etc., that he should pray daily for his soul, and the soul of Maud, his wife.

In 1267, together with the Manor of Blackbrooke and Gold Grange, the Chapel formed part of the possessions of Dore Abbey, and was served by their monks. In the same year Henry de Vien, Vicar of Skenfrith, was one of the witnesses to the grant by the

IN THE MARCH WALL

Abbot William of Dore to Edmund son of Henry III (Archd. Green, *Churches of Llandaff Diocese*).

We know that Edmund was living at Grosmont at that time, from a charter granted by him to the Prior of Llangua dated at Grosmont, 1268.

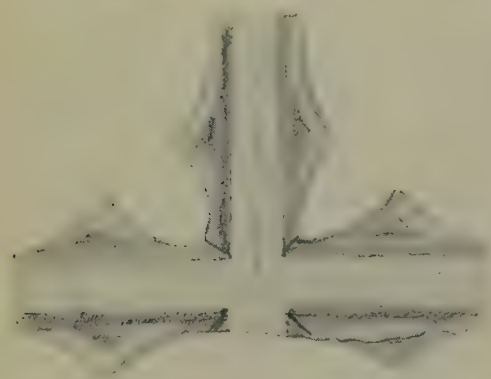
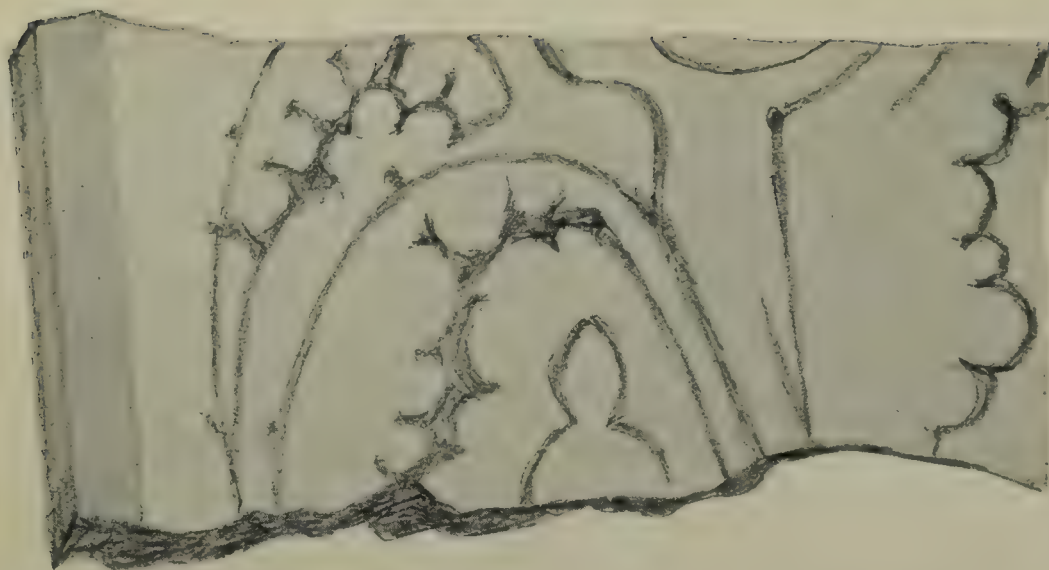
Edmund died in 1292, and we find in Patent Roll, 19 Edward I (1291) confirmation of the charter of Edmund the King's brother to the Abbot and convent of Grâce Dieu, dated "Grosmont, Wednesday, the Eve of All Saints, granting to them the advowson of the church of Skenfrith in frankalmoign for the souls of King Henry his father and Queen Eleanor his mother."

The next record of the Chantry Chapel is in the Duchy of Lancaster Minister's account, 43 Edward III (1369), when it was once more transferred to the Abbot of Dore.

The account of Phillip Kut, bailiff, for Michaelmas, whereof in tythes paid, to wit, in bread, wine and candles, in the Chapel of St. Noë *nothing*—because the Lord Henry (late Duke of Lancaster) remitted this said Chantry to the Abbot of Dore for 10 years, this being now the 10th year. In tythes of honey and wax 1 farthing.

We have found no further record until 1546, when Sir Richard Morgan of Blackbrooke left by his will "6/8 for the reparation of Skenfrith Church and 5/- to the Chapel of St. Noë at Blackbrooke."

The last notice we have is from the Duchy of Lancaster's Draft decrees, Elizabeth, May 5th 1591. "The Vicar of Skenfrith Roger ap Rosser was called into court to account for certain moneys and parcels of arable lands belonging to the Chapel of Saint Noë. The Vicar showed divers depositions taken from 23rd Elizabeth and an ancient writing of the appropriation of the Rectory and Parsonage of Skenfrith and a composition thereupon manifesting that certain lands should be assigned to the Vicar and his successors discharged of tythe, and forasmuch as it appears that the said lands were never used for the maintenance of any chantry or stipendiary priest, or for any light or lamp to continue for ever within the said



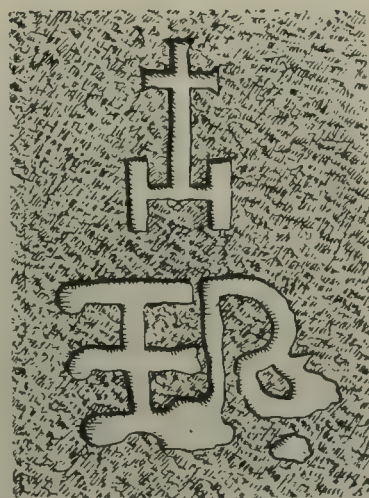
INCISED MARKS ON A SLAB AND PORTIONS OF THE CROSS IN THE
MINSTRELS' PEW IN ST. NOË'S CHAPEL

THE CHAPEL OF ST. NOË

chapel of St. Noë—they were always accounted the glebe lands—It is now ordered that the said Vicar may depart and that no further process be awarded against him.”

“The site of this chapel has lately (May 1914) been definitely located on the south side of Blackbrooke House and portions of the windows and arches have been found, also a large ornamental stone which probably surmounted the east gable end. It has a square hole cut in the centre in which no doubt the base of a cross was inserted, but the fragment of the cross itself is so small, it makes it difficult to date it with any exactitude. Probably it is 15th century. The design on the incised slab resembles a kind of pattern frequently seen on stained glass of about the second half of the 14th century. Nevertheless, if one saw a continuation of the pattern, it might turn out to be of somewhat later date.

“I have a strong suspicion that the Cross and E R is post-Reformation. The letters and the cross itself do not appear to be of a Gothic type.”
(PROFESSOR TRISTRAM).



MARK ON INCISED
SLAB

The carving is very deep and quite distinct though the edges are irregular. The fact that it was built into an inside wall of the Glebe barn, lately pulled down, would account for the good state of preservation. These stones were all removed to Blackbrooke for safe keeping, and it was hoped that perhaps some of them might have been placed in their relative positions.

But when war was declared it was decided that these precious relics of six and a half centuries would not find a safer or more suitable resting place than in the Parish Church, where they are now to be seen in the Minstrels' pew.

IN THE MARCH WALL

SECTION 3

BLACKBROOKE

Blackbrooke has taken its part in the history of Skenfrith, and the story of the two places is so interwoven that it is impossible to separate them. In 1267, the Manor of Blackbrooke and Cold



THE BLACK BROOK

Grange was "held of the Castle of Skenfrith" and with the Chantry Chapel of St. Noë formed part of the possessions of Dore Abbey, the Chapel being served by their Monks.

At the dissolution of Chantries (1545), Philip-ap-Morgan held Blackbrooke as well as Llanfair Cilgoed and was living at the former place in 1530.

The history of John and Richard Morgan has already been related (see p. 47).

The old Morgan bed was at Blackbrooke for many years. It was of the Jacobean period, very handsomely carved—with four massive pillars, and

heavy carved canopy. Over each pillow was a Norman Dog-tooth arch, and at the base of each arch, a shelf for "corpse watch lights."

The oak was badly wormed; it was treated in various ways, but after some time, as the bed was considered unsafe and might communicate dry rot to the old oak floor, it was removed.



OLD MAP OF BLACKBROOKE
(From the original in the British Museum.)

ANCIENT MAPS

In 1679, Father William Morgan of Blackbrooke was attached to the Jesuit College of St. Xavier, and held the lease of the Cwm (see Section on Cwm, p. 220) granted for a term of 99 years. Later will be given particulars of the Morgans of the Waen and of Blackbrooke from the Parish Register.

In the old Map at the British Museum (of which a facsimile is here shown) the Manor of Blackbrooke is given as extending from the Dyffryn to Cross Vane, Hilston, taking in Coedangred, and from the top of Blackbrooke hill to the Hom meadows over the river at Skenfrith to the lane skirting Ellis' Wood under Glenmonnow. There is no perspective in the drawing, the houses, church and castle lie on their sides—the names are written in Gothic characters, and the ploughed land and woods (large trees put singly) are coloured.

The high road from Ross to Abergavenny then went through the village, passed the Brink and out at Norton Cross, where it joined the road from Grosmont and so up the steep hill to Cross Vane. This map gives a wide road from Blackbrooke only to Cross Ash. The present road from the "Bell Inn" in Skenfrith was made to connect these two in 1820, and so the original high road is now only a narrow rose-tangled lane. The other coloured maps and plans of Blackbrooke (found in an old box of deeds) are interesting; some have crude pictures of the house and the old tower, and give the avenue of limes.

The earliest deed (in Latin) is dated 10 Charles I, 1634—from George Morgan to John Williams, "Bond for the quiet enjoyment of Tyr Constable (a field so called from the time when a Constable ruled the Castle) in Skenfreth."

Deed 1635.

In the 10th year of our Lord Charles by the grace of God King of England Scotland Ffrance and Ireland, etc., George Morgan to pay sixty pounds of good lawful English money to John Williams for Caylyssod—by the land of Thomas Boddenham of Blackbrooke.

IN THE MARCH WALL

1694. (*William and Mary.*)

Marriage settlement of Shusan only daughter and sole heiress of John Pritchard of Skenfrith and Thomas Harries, Younger sonne and heir apparent of Thomas Harries blacksmith of Skenfrith—3 large seals. Some of the deeds are elaborately decorated in pen and ink with portraits of reigning Sovereigns (especially of William and Mary) and the Royal coats of arms.

The enormous seals are in round tin boxes, attached—and the signatures are quaint and interesting, extending over twelve reigns. They comprise the purchase and sale of lands—Wills—Marriage settlements, etc. 275 of these were sent to the National Library of Wales—March 1st 1924.

THE BODENHAMS OF BLACKBROOKE AND FATHER PUGH

In the seventeenth century Blackbrooke was the seat of Thomas Bodenham (second son of Thomas Bodenham of Rotherwas), who died unmarried.

In 1669 Phillippe Bodenham “ Recusant of Blackbrooke ” was buried at Skenfrith.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, Blackbrooke belonged to George Scudamore, who married Ann, daughter of Roger Bodenham of Rotherwas—brother of Thomas of Blackbrooke.

The following account of a former inmate of Blackbrooke is given by Dom. Charles Pugh, O.S.B., of the Benedictine Missions :

“ Dom. William Charles Pugh (or Phillips) held a captaincy in the king’s army at Raglan Castle in 1648. Some years later he felt a call to the Religious life, and joined the Benedictine order and assumed the name of ‘ Charles ’ as his monastic name and worked in North and South Wales.

“ In 1678, he is reported as a ‘ Massing priest living in the house of the Bodenhams at Blackbrooke.’ His name figures in the list of suspected priests in 1680 as ‘ Captain Pue, a suspected priest.’ Again in 1689, he was marked as a priest then holding a certain property ‘ given for his support by the Bodenhams of Blackbrooke.’

WILLIAM AND ROBERT PUGH

“He left behind him a large collection of writings in verse and in prose, which are of great literary merit. He bore a large share in the Catholic movement of the seventeenth century which saved Monmouth to the Church for 150 years longer.

“His poems were copied and learned by all classes of the population.

“Besides his Welsh poems, Father Pugh compiled a catechism in Latin which remains in manuscript at Lanover.”

With this description of Dom. William Charles Pugh (or Phillips) should be compared the account of Robert Pugh (or Phillips) given in the Dictionary of National Biography. The resemblance between the two is so striking as to suggest the possibility that one and the same person must be intended and that the Christian name and some other particulars are incorrect in one account or the other. The Dictionary tells us that Robert Pugh (1609-1679), Roman Catholic controversialist, was born in Carnarvonshire and educated at the Jesuits' College, St. Omer, under the name of Robert Phillips. He is said to have served in Charles I's army with the rank of captain and to have been ejected by the Jesuits in 1645 for neglecting to obtain their permission to enter military service. He was the author of several theological and other works, including poetry, and an active controversialist on ecclesiastical subjects. In 1655 he was created by the Pope “Protonotarius publicus apostolicus.” After the Restoration he lived at Redcastle (Powis Castle) in the family of the Marquis of Powis. During the Popish Plot panic of 1678 Pugh was committed to Newgate, where he died January 22 1679. On his death-bed he desired to be re-admitted to the Jesuits' Society.

If this account is correct, Robert Pugh cannot be “Captain Pue” mentioned as living in 1680 and 1689. If they were different persons, it seems probable that some of the qualifications of one of them have been erroneously attributed to the other.

In 1783 Blackbrooke was the seat of Sir John Brigges, who had but a doubtful right to his title. He had assumed the Baronetcy

IN THE MARCH WALL

on the death of Sir Hugh Brigges, the last Baronet of Haughton in the County of Salop, but on what grounds does not appear.

In 1785 he mortgaged premises in Skenfrith for 500 years and in 1796 raised £600 on Blackbrooke (Deeds found at Blackbrooke).

In 1796 he was tried with others and convicted in Hereford of the forgery of the will of his father-in-law, the Rev. Henry Lewis, and sentenced to death.

The story in the country goes, that at the trial the witnesses swore that "there was life in the old man when he signed the will." To be able to say this, they collected the flies from the window-panes and filled the testator's mouth with them, while they guided his dead hand for his signature.

Sir John, however, escaped from prison, either by bribery or connivance, returned to Blackbrooke and lived there for years after, disguised, some say, as a lay brother, and others, as a servant. As his name does not appear in the Skenfrith Registers he was probably buried under a false name.

In 1797 Colonel The Honble. John Lindsay, seventh son of James, 5th Earl of Balcarres, bought the estate; among the old deeds is the marriage settlement of the Lady Charlotte North of "Great Blackbrooke," in 1800.

Colonel Lindsay let Little Blackbrooke and Llantellen to Thomas Davis for the "Yearly rent of one peppercorn payable if the same be lawfully demanded." He added to the estate and planted most of the ornamental trees.

It would appear that Colonel Lindsay sold Blackbrooke before 1812 to John Brigges, Esq., the son.

There is also a large coloured map of the estate giving the gardens, avenue, etc., "The property of John Brigges Esq. of Blackbrooke by Charles Smith—Land Surveyor, Monmouth dated 1812."

In 1827 John Brigges and Sarah Pugh were joint Patrons of the Living, and William Norton Vicar of Skenfrith.

In 1827 Blackbrooke was purchased by John Crawford, who lived there for thirty years. Behind the house in the shrubbery



BLACKBROOKE

SITUATION OF BLACKBROOKE

is an old tower which is sketched at the top of one or two of the Deeds. Tradition has it that it was the entrance to a subterranean passage leading to the castle. This is unlikely, as the castle is two miles away, but it might have been connected with Llantellen. No doubt it led to one of the many hiding places which abounded in this neighbourhood, and which those troublous times rendered necessary. It would be used by some of the Morgans, Father Pugh, and Sir John Brigges. Mr. Crawford (one of the sons) made particular enquiries about this tower in 1886; he said it used to be their favourite "play place" as children, until their father disappointed them all by filling up the passage. Across one of the bedroom windows is written with a diamond, "Crawford," and that pane of glass has survived nearly 100 years and is still unbroken (1926).

1857. Peter Rothwell Jackson bought Blackbrooke from Mr. Crawford, and added much to the estate, which comprised 2,000 acres. The house, about 600 ft. above the sea, is built on the sheltered side of Blackbrooke hill, which commands a most extensive view of the Malvern Hills, the Sugar Loaf, the Skyrriid (or Holy Mountain), the Black Mountain range and the Forest of Dean. Behind the hill rises the Graig Mountain.

Passing through the iron gates with a lodge on the right (which is built on the plan of Blackbrooke), the house is approached by an avenue of three-quarters of a mile of magnificent lime trees, and surrounded by finely timbered and undulating park land.

The grounds are quaint and picturesque, with shady wilderness walks. There are remarkably fine cedars, copper beeches and yew trees on the lawns.

The house is a good specimen of Adam's style of architecture, with verandah looking on grass terraces and rosery. It is covered with magnolia, ivy and climbing roses. There is a "Well" hall with two galleries above. The double drawing-room, with two large windows to the ground and a French window opening on to the

IN THE MARCH WALL

terrace, faces due south, and looks away over the lawn and sunk fence towards Monmouth.

Mr. Jackson was one of the first to form a herd of pedigree Hereford cattle (1858), in which he took a great interest. The herd was sold by his son in 1915.

He died at Blackbrooke, February 8th 1899, in his eighty-seventh year.

1899 to 1919. Robert Newton Jackson, son of Peter Rothwell Jackson, improved and added to the estate, and rebuilt many of the farms.

He bought the advowson of the church in 1883 from the late vicar (Mr. Speke). The restoration of the church, in 1910, was largely due to his interest and help. The castle of Skenfrith (the oldest border castle in Wales) with the land adjoining, was purchased by him from the Duke of Beaufort in 1899.

He showed, and took many prizes with, his pedigree stallions and Hereford cattle, and was always greatly interested in farming matters.

He died December 13th 1919, in his seventy-sixth year.

* * *

1920. Sir Alfred Fripp bought the estate, which was afterwards divided and sold in lots.

1922. W. Ralph Herring, Esq., bought Blackbrooke House and 375 acres of land.

THE CHINESE WALL-PAPER IN THE TWO DRAWING-ROOMS

“Whatever you have in your rooms, think *first* of your walls for they are that which makes your house and your home.”

Since these words were spoken by William Morris, there has been a conscious endeavour on every side to produce beautiful designs for wall-papers.

“Every wall-paper,” he said, “must have a distinct idea in it ; some beautiful piece of nature must have pressed itself so forcibly



CHINESE WALLPAPER IN DRAWING-ROOM AT BLACKBROOKE

OLD CHINESE WALL-PAPER

on our notice that we are quite full of it ” ; and probably no nation has ever carried the science of decorative composition to such an extraordinary perfection as the Chinese.

Wall decorations made of paper, though they have been in use from very early times in China, did not come into fashion in Europe till about the middle of the sixteenth century, when they began to be imported by the Spanish and Dutch merchants ; but it was not before the end of the following century that they found their way to our islands.

Soon after the accession of William and Mary, when the Chinese craze had invaded England, wall-papers designed and painted in China began to reach our shores. The rapprochement with Holland (whose oriental trade had long ago provided this luxury for herself), consequent on the arrival here of the Dutch princes, was to some extent responsible for this. So the coming of wall-papers to match the prevailing taste was joyfully welcomed, and, though far from cheap, they remained in fashion for nearly a century and a half. The frequent mention in the *livre-Journal* of Duvaux (mid-eighteenth century) of so many “ *feuilles de papier la Chine fond blanc a fleurs et oiseaux* ” being supplied for paper hangings to the nobility, always has reference to these importations from China.

The delightful paper in the possession of the Berkeley family at Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire, has been hanging since the close of the seventeenth century, and it is thus one of the first to be put up in an English home.

These old papers, hung 160 or 170 years ago, are absolutely unsurpassed by any modern production, and we cannot be too grateful for the miracle of their survival, showing as they do the art of the Chinese designer before it had become contaminated by western influence, or done to order from western patterns. The colour is executed entirely by hand without the aid of either block or stencil. The design, as is always the case with Chinese papers, is varied all round the room. Pheasants, cranes and richly plumaged birds rest upon the boughs and fill the air above them, and below upon the ground are ducks, the “ Ho ” bird and silver pheasants.

IN THE MARCH WALL

The colours are harmoniously combined. The many hued birds and flowers shine with subdued splendour among the pale olive and dark bluish green of the foliage.

“When it occurred to a loyal gentleman about 1783 to present the Prince Regent with a few pieces of Chinese wall-paper, who would have foreseen as the result the Brighton Pavilion of to-day? Yet this is how it did happen. The Pavilion, a costly toy even for a Prince, was built round those rolls of Chinese paper, and it took forty years in building, and it is, and will always be, the most beautiful in Brighton, and the only building that has about it even the ghost of poetry, romance, and imagination.” (*Daily Mail*, February 1st 1921.)

The Blackbrooke paper is of very graceful design of bamboo with trailing creeper hanging in festoons, and exquisite birds, no two alike throughout the two drawing rooms.

In the foreground are lakes and rivers—with curious duck and water fowl, and in the distance faint blue mountains.

The colours, though rich, are very soft, and the background of pale grey blue, very delicate.

In many places the design had become almost obliterated. In 1900 it was very carefully touched up by Phillip Carter and a pupil from the South Kensington Art School.

Most unfortunately, during the two years Blackbrooke was unoccupied after the sale, the paper was greatly damaged by damp and had to be removed (1922).



MISS ANN PRICHARD
The Skenfrith Centenarian

OLD FOLK OF SKENFRITH

SECTION 4

FOLK-LORE OF SKENFRITH

The poet Thomas Churchyard wrote of this country—

“Great health have they

In such sweete soyle who dwell,”

and it is not unusual to come across centenarians in the registers. Elizabeth Charles died of bronchitis in September 1887, said to be 106 years old. She was perfectly intelligent and sensible to the day of her death, and had a most wonderful memory, particularly for things which happened in her youth. She had only once in her long life been as far as Hereford, and had never seen a train. The only request she made was that her age should be “put in the paper,” and this was done.

Some of the old folk living in Skenfrith a few years ago were particularly interesting, and full of information about past days. James Rosser of the New Inn, who died in 1899, aged eighty-seven, was born in the house he then occupied. He and his forbears had rented the castle grounds for nearly 200 years, and he should certainly take his place as the last “warden of the castle,” for he had kept the keys, and had made his cider from the orchard within its walls for more than seventy years. He was Parish Constable for many years before the County Police were appointed.

Miss Pritchard celebrated her hundredth birthday in 1899; she died in the bed in which she had been born, in the house which had belonged to her family for 200 years. The Brink stands upon a bank above the rose-tangled lane which used to be the high road to Abergavenny, past the Skenfrith Jail, traces of which remain. She remembered the present road from the Bell Inn to Norton being made—“the year I went to live at Colonel Vaughan’s, Courtfield, in 1822.” She had any amount of folk-lore and many interesting memories of her youth spent in Skenfrith. She told how she and seven little companions had to cross the Monnow by a wire bridge to attend the only school available, held by the vicar in the vestry of Garway Church. In going and returning they had

IN THE MARCH WALL

to pass the cottage of the witch, "by the well at the bottom of Hell's Wood" (Ellis' Wood, Glen Monnow), when each child in turn spat and cursed her, because "her eye was upon them crossing the wire." This unfortunate Circe got the credit of being the cause of every calamity which happened in the neighbourhood. The fish in the river died, and the ducks were drowned, because the landlord at the "Bell" put a sack over her head and beat her for a previous offence.

An old woman, called a witch, collected toll at the turnpike gate at Norton Cross. There were four roads with three gates, two of them being about forty yards from the toll house. She lived alone and used to come to open the gates in any convenient costume night or day. It is said that, before coming to Norton Cross, she had the care of a toll gate on the Ross Road and there being no house attached, she made her home in a large sugar cask, probably as contented as Diogenes. After the turnpikes were done away with she went to the Glebe Barn at Blackbrooke, where she died.

It used to be said there would always be nine witches from the bottom of Orcop to the end of Garway Hill and "there will be a witch at Almeley as long as water runs."

At Weobly children were taught to say on meeting a supposed witch :—

"If thee beist a witch—the Devil take thee.

"If thee baint a witch—the Almighty bless thee."

If meeting anyone suspected of witchcraft or the "evil eye," they would spit upon the ground and say "Sattan, I defy thee" (Mrs. Leather, *Folk-lore of Herefordshire*).

In 1649 a specially appointed witch-finder arrived in Newcastle—the Magistrates sent the bell-man through the town to proclaim that "All persons who could bring any complaint against any woman for a witch she should be sent for and tried by the person appointed."

Thirty women were brought to the Town Hall, and after being stripped, their bodies were cruelly perforated with pins by the "finder." He seldom let any escape his ordeal—as from £1 to £3



SIX OLD FRIENDS OF MISS PRICHARD

COST OF WITCH-BURNING

each was paid for all whom he declared guilty. Subsequently he confessed before his execution that he had put 220 women to death.

The burning of a witch was an expensive item which had to be shared by the town and the Church. Here are some particulars given in 1636.

For ten loads of coal to burn two witch men, five									
merks	...	...	...	...	...	...	£3	6	8
For a tar barrel 14s.	...	...	...	...	...	...	0	14	0
For towes	...	...	...	...	...	...	0	6	0
To him that brought the executioner	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	18	0
To the executioner for his pains	...	...	...	...	...	...	8	14	0
For his expenses here	...	...	...	...	...	...	0	16	4
For one to go for the laird...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0	6	0
Summa for the town	...	...	...	...	...	...	£17	1	0

The Church's part, £17 10s., making a total of £34 11s. (or sterling £2 17s. 7d.)—(*Daily Mail*, January 26th, 1926.)

Miss Pritchard had a tale, also vouched for by others, that a Hereford bull escaped from Part-y-Seal, mounted the castle wall, and, having walked all round, came down again in safety. She knew the legend of the castle, which she thought was true, and said the Devil and his dame could be seen dancing in the castle when the moon was full. She was the village poet, and had a rhyme for every occasion. At the party given in honour of her hundredth birthday she repeated these lines :

“ God bless the lady of ——
 And happy may she be.
 And may she live a many year,
 To make a cake for me.”

She then signed her name :

“ An Prichard
 Borned 1799.”

She did not wish her photograph taken because “ it was forbidden

IN THE MARCH WALL

in Scripture" ("nor the *likeness* of anything that is in Heaven above or in the earth beneath") "and the Devil would be sure to have you if there was a likeness to go by."

(Do not the Arabs hold this belief, and cover their faces or turn their backs when they see a camera?)

After explanations, Miss Pritchard's objections were eventually overcome, and a photograph bearing her autograph was sent to Queen Victoria, who with her usual kindness sent her own in return, with the message that she was "much interested in hearing of Miss Pritchard, and sent her photograph for her acceptance, hoping it would give her pleasure."

"Granny" Powell died in 1919 in her 100th year. She had a wonderful memory, was very bright and active and often walked more than a mile to church on Sundays within a very few years of her death.

* * * * *

It was the general practice in bygone days not very far remote for the churchwardens to visit the public-houses during the time of church service to see that no persons were drinking, a sure occasion of the offender's being placed in the stocks. Every person convicted of drunkenness was fined 5s. or sentenced to spend six hours in the stocks; wood stealers or hedge tearers were in 1584 set in the stocks for two days (Tyac, *Eccles. Curiosities*).

Some of the old folk of Skenfrith remembered the stocks under the yew tree, at the church gate.

Henry VIII instituted the famous whipping Act in 1530 (22 Henry VIII, chap. 12), and in Elizabeth's reign whipping-posts were general. Four-pence was the charge for whipping male and female rogues; persons obtaining goods under false pretences were publicly flogged, and insane persons did not escape the lash.

"1690. Paid in charges taking up a distracted woman, watching her, and whipping her next day 8.6."

"1710. Paid Thomas Hawkins for whipping two persons who had small-pox 8d." (Andrews, *Bygone Punishments*).

DESECRATING THE SABBATH

SABBATH-BREAKING

In 1595 a book put forth by one Dr. Nicholas Bownd called *The Doctrine of the Sabbath* gave rise to the first disagreement between the High Church party and the Puritans on the point of doctrine.

In his book he maintained that the "seventh part of our time ought to be devoted to the service of God."

"The ringing of more bells than one on the Sabbath day is not to be justified."

"No solemn feasts nor wedding dinners to be made on that day (with permission notwithstanding of the same, to Lords, Knights and Gentlemen of quality)."

"All honest recreations and pleasures lawful on other days (as shooting, fencing, bowling) on this day to be forborn. No man to speak or talk of pleasures or any other worldly matter."

Some preachers persuaded the people that it was unlawful to sweep their houses, or to dress meat, to kindle the fire, and the like. The Popish priests took occasion thereby to pervert many to Popery. James, in the sixteenth year of his reign, set forth a declaration:—

"That for his good people's lawful recreations his good pleasure was, that after the end of Divine Service, they should not be disturbed or discouraged from any lawful actions, such as dancing for men or women, nor from having May games, Whitsun ales, Maurice dances, and the setting up of Maypoles, or other sports therewith used, without impediment or let of Divine service, and the women may carry their rushes to the church for the decoring of it according to their old custom."

"Withal prohibiting all unlawful games on the Sundays only, as Bear-baiting, Bull-baiting—Interludes, and Bowling (these at all times in the meaner sort of people be prohibited)" (Baker's *Chronicle*, 1648).

IN THE MARCH WALL

SPORTS

James I issued a *Book of Sports* which recommended certain games as lawful and desirable on the Lord's day, and every Bishop was ordered to read from the pulpit the Royal declaration in favour of Sunday pastimes.

One Puritan minister had the wit to obey and added, "You have heard read, good people, the commandment of God and the commandment of man, obey which you please." Hundreds of Puritan ministers were cited before the High Commission, and silenced, or deprived (Tyac, *Eccles. Curiosities*).

The great day of the year was that on which the Wakes were held, always the first Sunday after the day of the Saint to whom the church was dedicated, and the Wake, or feast, was invariably held in the churchyard, and the evening of the Sunday was spent in sport, pastime, and fighting. At Orcop an ox or a ram was roasted whole for the feast, under a yew tree near the churchyard, in which the people sat to eat it, and at Garway one may still see a stone ledge or seat running along the outside of the church wall for the use of those who watched the sports (Mrs. Leather, *Folk-lore of Herefordshire*).

Skenfrith on this great holiday of the year was gay with booths and coloured streamers. There was wrestling in the churchyard, when the farmers of the parish settled their differences of the past year in a free fight ; this was begun much in the same fashion as at an Irish fair, when Pat trailed his coat behind him, challenging the crowd : "Where's the boy that dare tread on the tail o' me coat?" The custom in Skenfrith was to put a big bun on a stake, and the rush and struggle to get a bite were sufficient to rouse the temper and start the fight, in which many were disabled "and knocked about above a bit" (J. Rosser, 1899).

There were at this time five public houses in the village, and, during the Wake, dances at most of them. Fifty couples could "take the floor" at one house, and fiddlers were never tired, "for them, the drinks were free."

One old woman of 89 spoke of her friend of 80 as "a rare dancer she were, not one as could touch her. Eh ! but them *were* times,

QUAINT PLACE NAMES

seems folk has lost all their spirit now," and the old face flushed with excitement at the memory.

"Parson Miller" put a stop to these Wakes in 1841, for which he received many insults, and had to defend himself against the attacks of indignant villagers; but he was a big, strong man, and paid them in their own coin, with an amount of determination that carried his point.

The churchyard seems to have been the recreation ground of the village; "a game of ball" (fives?) used to be played against the north wall of the church in the evenings, while the spectators sat around on tombstones, and drank cider.

On a stile leading into the churchyard at Llanweir Liscoed is engraven a fearful warning to Sabbath breakers, which unwittingly immortalises the Sunday habits of a bygone generation of villagers:

Whoever here on Sunday
Should practise playing at ball
It may be afore Monday
The Devil will have ye all.
(Wade's *Monmouthshire*.)

Some Quaint Local "Place Names."

"The Gloryhole Valley."	"Starve Crow Farm."
"Paradise."	"Dawn of Day Wood."
"Hell's Wood."	"Cupid's Pitch."

In the Register we find:

"Thomas Morgan of 'By and By' buriode."

"The Toad's hole." The old woman who lived in this cottage never objected to the name, which she had probably known all her life, till her daughter went to a situation in London and refused to write home unless the address was changed. Her mother was told she might arrange with the postman for any name she wished, but as the cottage had been called 'The Toad's hole' from time immemorial, and was so given in old local maps, it could not be changed. How did such a name originate?

IN THE MARCH WALL

LEGENDS

“ We may reject legends if we please,
but history would be incomplete without them.”

Phillott.

There is said to have been a convent in what was called “ Helle’s Wood, Garroway,” now Ellis Wood, under Glenmonnow. The legend goes that it was connected with the castle by a subterranean passage by which great wealth was conveyed and received, probably at the water gate of the castle, and buried in the foundations.

Opposite to the tower, in the north wall, is a doorway, the pointed arch of which is only a little above the level of the court. As the sill of this door must be just above the level of the river, it was probably connected with it by a short canal for the entrance of boats.

The legend of the castle which follows would confirm this, and it was accepted in the time of Elizabeth ; even to-day it is believed that treasure is to be found there. This would account in a great measure for the evidence of frequent excavation. It has been suggested that the nuns of this convent embroidered the cope before described for some great dignitary in attendance on the King (Father Abbott and Rev. W. Speke).

There is also a legend about St. Freide’s Well, close by, but this we have not been able to trace.

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THIS IS THE LEGEND OF THE CASTLE

Among the Lansdowne MSS. in the British Museum is a curious paper relating to Skenfrith castle, which throws some light upon the treasure legends of Wales and the Marches. It is dated April 28 1589, and is addressed to the Lord Treasurer, Burleigh, by a Welshman incarcerated in the Tower of London for some offence. The letter begs permission in quaint English to delve for treasure beneath the castle on behalf of the Crown, success in his endeavours being the price of his liberty. “ The voyce of this country (he writes) goeth there is a dyvill and his dam in this castel ; one

SKENFRITH CASTLE



Warren Williams 1879

SKENFRITH CASTLE

IN THE MARCH WALL

sets on a hogshhead of gold and the other upon a hogshhead of silver." The Welshman undertakes to eject both "by the grace of God and without any charge to the Quene or your lordships. If the treasure be there, I will look for something at your hands,



THE DEVIL AND HIS DAM

for the countrey saith there is great treasure. No man in remembrance was ever seen to open it, and great warrs hath been at it."

THE LEGEND OF THE GLASTONBURY THORN

Canon Barron writes in 1916 :

"... In the orchard of the little cottage on the left-hand side when you pass the White House, just at the bottom of the hill on the way to Grosmont, there is a Glastonbury Thorn. It blossoms on Twelfth Night at midnight—the Glastonbury one, on Christmas night. My gardener's boy heard of the Legend and determined to test it, so he and another boy started off at 10 p.m. on January 5th and witnessed the blossoming at 12. He brought home four slips and

THE LEGEND OF THE PRIEST'S WELL

showed me the blossom next day. I am having them struck, and you are to have the best. I know you will appreciate it."

THE LEGEND OF THE PRIEST'S WELL IN THE DARRAN WOOD

"This faire cleere spring
Which courses through ye hilles,
Conveys somme mettawl tincture in hir rilles
Which they make staine of bluid." (1636.)

A wealth of mediæval lore has been gathered about revered places where water-springs bubble. Quaint superstitions linger in rural spots, and many legends are cherished of the past and cause reflection on those places which our ancestors deemed consecrated and in which they rendered worship.

Crossing the bridge at Skenfrith and following the winding river path, the hills in that narrow valley are full of interest. Nestling in the wood up above the "Sandhouse" and overshadowed by a wide spreading oak is the "Priest's Well." Its crystal water bubbles up incessantly; flung over the stones forming its sides and roof is a mantle of green moss and ferns. Here in this quiet nook a tragedy took place which could not be better told than by Father Abbott, who wrote in 1897:—

"About 60 years ago I tried to gather up the traditions regarding the stream in the Darran Glen and the blood stains on the stones



THE PRIEST'S WELL

IN THE MARCH WALL

which at that time were very distinct, especially on the ledge of rock which is about the middle of the fall of water from the upper brook, just where it leaves the wood. It was then so surrounded by bushes, it looked like a dark grotto. All that I could learn was that a Catholic priest had been slain and his head cut off there and then, for the £5 reward which was offered for the head of any Catholic priest found in this country after Queen Elizabeth's orders for all to depart by St. John's day 1559, or to change the 'Missal' for the 'Book of Common Prayer.'

"The Franciscan friars who were living near Rockfield used to make a pilgrimage to this place every year.

" 'The stream it ran sae fresh and clear
An' down the stream ran his heart's bluid.' "

It was believed that this stream possessed certain healing properties, and many carried the water away in bottles. It was also said to petrify articles left in the water, such as twigs, birds' nests, and knitting in which the needles had been left. Miss Pritchard remembered specimens in some of the Skenfrith cottages. The soil over which the water flows becomes a kind of porous stone like a petrified sponge, and in the little nooks and crannies ferns and moss grow luxuriantly, so the stones are in great request locally for making rockeries.

Tradition ascribes the gaping fissure in the side of the Skyrrid or Holy Mountain to the earthquake at the Crucifixion. In bygone days it was the custom for the farmers for miles round, to carry large sackfuls of earth from this fissure to sprinkle over their fields and gardens, and even over the coffins of the dead (Wade's *Monmouthshire*).

"There has been no snail upon it ever since, or worm either; that is because it is sacred; they cannot go there" (Mrs. Leather, *Folk-lore of Herefordshire*).

" 'Tis a haunted place
And spell beset."



SKENFRITH CASTLE: BUCK'S VIEW

SECTION 5

SKENFRITH CASTLE

Behold but Wales, and note the castels there
And ye shall find no such works anywhere ;
So old, so strong, so costlie and so hye,
Not under sunne is to be seene with eye.

THOMAS CHURCHYARD, 1587.

“The castle was an early and remarkable type of Border stronghold, garrisoned in time of war and tumult to hold and protect the passage of the Monnow, a most important strategic position. There is little doubt that when the castle was maintained, there was only a ford, and certainly in those days the ford must always have been difficult of passage, and sometimes impassable. In times of flood the castle must have been impregnable, for then it was an island, and in those early days projectiles of any considerable flight were unknown” (Harper’s *Marches*).

The following is interesting :—

“Labouriouse journey and serche of one John Leylands for England’s antiquities geven by hyme as a new yeare’s gyfte to King Henri VIII in the XXXVII yeare of hys raygne, begunne about 1538.

“The River Mône riseth in a place called ‘Foresthene’ (Forest of Dean?) about twenty miles west from Monmouth and the castel of Skenefryth standeth five miles from Monmouth town, on the Mône river, on the very ripe of it, and in times past the river did goe around about the castel dyke. Much of the utterward of this castel yet standeth, the site of it be somewhat lowe ; there be a stone bridge over the Mône, a little above the castel yet standeth. Hubert de Burgh, Earl of Kent, was lord of Skenefrythe.”

This bridge “a little above the castel” (i.e. up the river) cannot now be traced, but in a map at the British Museum about the time of Henry VIII (of which there is a copy facing p. 63) the road from

IN THE MARCH WALL

Monmouth (which passes the Bell inn) is given to the bank of the river, and a bridge there would connect it with the old lane leading up to Garway church. In the opposite direction, this road (now a narrow and almost impassable lane) ran past the Brink and out at Norton Court and so to Abergavenny. The present road was made in 1822.

Even in the days of Queen Elizabeth the walls of the castle were ruinous, and the occasion of superstitious dread ; for a petitioner of the Queen's Minister wrote :

"The voyce of the country goeth there be a devil and his dam in this castel, one sitteth on a hogshead of silver and one on a hogshead of gold " (see *Legends*, p. 78).

The poet Churchyard travelled through Wales specially to collect particulars of objects of interest for Queen Elizabeth, which he compiled and dedicated to her. Here is an extract from his book *Worthiness of Wales* :—

"The goodly castles are to be mused on, and merites to be registered in everlasting memorie, and chiefly the castles that stand like a company of fortes (of which Skenfrith is the oldest) may not be forgotten, their buildings are so princely, their strength is so greate, and they are such stately scales and defences of nature. The Royalties thereof are always looked unto, but the castels do dayly decay, a sorrowful sight and in a manner remediles, any heart in the world would pittee the decay of the castels in Monmouthshire."

He speaks thus of the "Trilateral" :—

"Three castles fair are in a goodly ground—
Grossemont is one, on hill it builded was,
Skenefrythe is next, in valley it is found,
The soyle about for pleasure there doth passe.
Whitcastle is the third, of worthy fame,
The country there doth bear Whitcastle's name,
A stately seat, a lofty, princely place,
Whose beauty gives the simple soil some grace."

THE CASTLE IN THE MIDDLE AGES

In the fifth year of Elizabeth (1563) particulars are given by the Duchy of Lancaster special Commission :

“The castel of Skenfrythe lacketh a brig (drawbridge over the moat). The mayne wall and vanmure (the walk behind the parapet) of the same is sufficient and in good state, and the inner buyldynges of the same, savyng a dongon standing in the myddes thereof, are in uter ruyne, the tyle and tymbor, iron and leed thereof rotton or takken away.”

Edward IV (a Yorkist) was jealous of the Lancastrian power, and ordered all their castles in Monmouthshire to be dismantled, so Skenfrith and Grosmont were destroyed. Pembridge Castle, which was a Yorkist stronghold, was not touched.

In the reign of James I the castle is reported as “Ruinous and decayed out of the memory of man” (Mrs. Bagnall Oakeley in *Mon. Antiq. Soc.*, 1896).

“The form of Skenfrith castle is a trapezium, of which the northern and southern sides are 74 yards and 71 yards, and the eastern and western 31 yards and 57 yards ; within this area is an early, moated mound, and at the Norman Conquest these ancient mounds (which existed in earlier strongholds) were used to carry the great stone ‘keeps’ of the conquerors, and they must have been of considerable antiquity to sustain the weight of these structures.

“The mound upon which a ‘keep’ has been erected, as well as other works in the vicinity of a castle, have usually been occupied by earlier inhabitants than the stone castle builders. The Normans almost always built their castles in situations that had previously been held for defensive purposes” (Mrs. Bagnall Oakeley).

“It was believed until quite recently that the Norman builders of these castles found ready to their hands the mounds of English or Silurian digging, or even of earlier prehistoric date, and crowned these with a keep of stone.

“Freeman took this view, and in my history of Ewyas Harold I adopted it. But Mr. J. Horace Round and others who have carefully investigated the matter, have proved beyond all reasonable

IN THE MARCH WALL

doubt that the mounds themselves were thrown up by the Normans, on the model of the 'motte' or artificial mound, which always formed the keep of a castle in Normandy, having round it a base-court or bailey, ditched and palisaded like the keep itself. In the Bayeux tapestry there is a picture of Duke William's troops, after the great battle, throwing up just such a 'motte' at Hastings, and the inscription about the picture says 'Jussit Ut foderetur Castellum' ('He commandeth a castle to be digged').

"Remains of castles of this motte-and-bailey type, are to be found everywhere along our border. Richard's castle and that of Ewyas Harold, as they are the earliest in England, so also are perhaps the finest specimens of the type" (Canon Bannister in *Herefordshire and Its Place in English History*).

"The Skenfrith keep is a cylindrical tower, with a battering base, which is entirely unconnected with the curtain walls, and at present about forty feet high, thirty-six feet in diameter, and the walls six feet thick. (Such towers are also known as 'Juliets.') The present entrance is by a doorway five feet six inches in opening, but the masonry and absence of barholes show that this is not original, and a remarkable feature of this castle is that no doorway on a level with the ground was included in the original plan of the Keep. An opening on the first floor gave access by a movable plank or gangway, which could be drawn up on the outer wall being stormed and the garrison hard pressed.

"The curtain wall of the single court is eight feet thick, and from thirty to forty feet high externally. The four angle towers are cylindrical, measuring eleven feet inside. The apertures are merely 'oeillets' for the discharge of arrows.

"Each tower is entered by a door three feet wide, the floors were timber and no staircases now remain. Some of the arches are round-headed, others are pointed, and the loop-holes are square.

"Opposite the tower in the north wall is a doorway, the pointed arch of which is only a little above the level of the court. As the sill of this door must be just above the level of the river, it was probably



“YE BYEGONE LADYES OF SYNEFFRAID”

A SKENFRITH PAGEANT

connected with it by a short canal, for boats to come up by. There is no trace of a regular gate-house to this court, but a part of the centre of the west wall has been rebuilt in an inferior manner, and probably the entrance was at this point. Buck's view taken in 1732 shows a broken arch with two windows over it. The ancient earthwork indicates that the fortress must have been of British construction. It is one of a line of castles which defends the Monnow valley, and of as remote antiquity as any in Wales" (Mrs. Bagnall Oakeley, *Antiquarian Society*, 1896).

Archdeacon Coxe, in his *Monmouthshire*, says :

"I have little hesitation in deciding from its architecture that Skenfrith is the oldest castle in Monmouthshire and anterior to the Conquest."

HISTORICAL FÊTE AT SKENFRITH CASTLE, AUGUST, 1899.

The following is an account of the Fête held in the Castle for the purpose of forming the foundation of a fund for the reparation of the Church, by which a sum of £250 was raised :

On Wednesday and Thursday, August 30th and 31st, 1899, the little village of Skenfrith went through an experience quite unique in its history. The quiet, peaceful spot was *en fête*, and had decked itself right bravely with bunting and gay flowers of every hue. The bells in the old dovecote tower of the church rang merrily and the one little street was thronged with strangers. Carriages and loaded brakes (before the days of motors) were coming in from every direction, filled with visitors anxious to witness a sight which it would have been impossible to produce with more suitable surroundings.

"Ye byegone Ladyes of Syneffraid" were about to "hold Court in their ancient Castel on ye banks of ye Mōne, and had commanded that all honest men and their dames do forthwith attend." There was to be "Joust and revel and ye stately daunce" by ye ladyes themselves, which in itself was no small attraction,

IN THE MARCH WALL

when it was known that twenty-two of the prettiest and most graceful in the county had been specially instructed in their several parts by Miss Sayer, of Cheltenham College.

The scene within the Castle to-day was very effective. Grouped in designs on the massive walls were flags of various devices, probably of late date, but the effect was martial ; while from the centre tower of " Juliet " floated the Standard of Henry V (copied



QUEENS' PAGEANT

for this occasion from an authentic sketch). Knights in glittering armour paced to and fro. Brian Fitz Count, the first Norman Lord of Skenfrith, with his wife, the daughter of the Conqueror, were there ; Hubert de Burgh, with his fourth wife, Princess Margaret of Scotland ; Prince Llewelyn, with his two daughters, who had married successive Lords of the Castle ; William de Breosa and his wife Maud, who was starved to death in Windsor Castle ; John

of Gaunt and his three wives ; Lionel Duke of Clarence and his Duchess, who was Elizabeth de Burgh, and many others whose dames were in the " train of sweet Ladyes so fair." The Abbot of Grâce Dieu Priory strolled about with his monks. In only a few short years he was to receive from the Crusader Lord of Skenfrith, Edmund Cruxback, our Church and lands, in payment

BYEGONE LADYES OF SYNEFFRAID

for his prayers for the repose of the soul of his mother, Eleanor of Provence, the "Rose Queen" of to-day.

Courtiers, Jesters, Beef-eaters, many and various were the costumes ; those whom centuries had divided, here walked side by side, within the very walls they had bravely defended, or whose Lords they had "outed," as the case might be.

The tracing of relationships over a period of five hundred years was intensely interesting, and caused much amusement to the actors themselves.

The procession of "ye ladyes," in Indian file, according to their dates, was most picturesque as it wound round the Castle under the orchard trees—which in these peaceful days give grateful shade—and out over the temporary drawbridge to the tilting ground.

Led by a Saxon Princess (the wife of the first Lord of whom there is any record), in soft clinging draperies, with wimple and veil—the costumes gradually increased in richness, till Mary Tudor, in glittering silver brocade and diamonds, and Elizabeth, gorgeous in blue and gold, with a profusion of jewels, brought up the rear—as the last "Ladye of Syneffraid."

The costume of Queen Eleanor of Provence was peculiarly adapted to the character ; she, being the first Red Rose of the House of Lancaster, wore a crown of Provence roses, with upper dress of rose satin, and petticoat of pale green ; her crimson velvet train, which was six yards in length, was borne by her Maids of Honour, quaintly dressed in pale green princess robes, with long open sleeves to the ground, lined with pink, and close crimson velvet caps, having beneath the soft white veils of the period. All these were specially adapted by Mrs. Bagnall Oakeley, from Planche's *Cyclopædia of Costume*, and from other authentic sources ; many were copied from the monuments on the tombs of the ladies themselves. These are illustrated by Mr. Warren Williams in the Author's little book, *Ye byegone ladyes of Syneffraid*, which contains a history of each character.

IN THE MARCH WALL

With stately step, the long train marched to the old-world (and specially selected) music of the band, till the dancing platform was reached, above which was raised the throne of Eleanor of Provence, draped with regal purple, and surmounted by a huge gilt crown. On her right were Isabella of Angoulême, Queen of John—Philippa of Hainault, Queen of Edward III, Blanche, Queen of Navarre, second wife of Queen Eleanor's third son, Edmund Cruxback, and on her left Queen Mary Tudor—and Queen Elizabeth.

As the Lords of Skenfrith who followed Edmund Cruxback were also Dukes of Lancaster, many of the characters were selected from among their wives, and "Ye daunce of ye Duchesses" was a special feature in the programme, and one of the most successful items.

The quaint figures of the dance were arranged by Miss Sayer, and her pupils did her infinite credit.

Blaunche, wife of John of Gaunt	}	Duchesses
Matilda, widow of Otto of Bavaria		of
Avelene, wife of Edmund Cruxback		Lancaster.
Elizabeth de Burgh 		Duchess of Clarence

"Ye Rose daunce," by the Maids of Honour, was a great success and very cleverly performed by eight little village maidens, after much patient teaching by their Queen.

Then came the event of the day, the *pas seul* of "Ye Rose Queene" herself, who enchanted all her subjects by her exceeding grace and sweetness. Her cymbals, flashing in the sunlight, marked time with a martial clash which was well in keeping with the surroundings.

And now, as the programme has it, "right comelily with flags and spears shall daunce ye ladyes of Syneffraid, in honour of their own true knights who guard the Castel." This was delightful, the grouping and posing with the sun touching up the spear heads and the brilliant colouring, producing most effective pictures.

CEREMONIAL OF THE TILT

Ye Tournament

The array of mounted Knights was, as it was meant to be, a travesty, very cleverly done, and highly amusing. The hobby-horses (supplied by Simmons, of Covent Garden, as also the knights' costumes, armour, etc.) were high mettled steeds requiring clever handling, though occasionally one bolted, causing consternation among the crowd. The merry antics of the jesters, with their gaudily caparisoned white donkey, were greatly appreciated and greeted with shouts of laughter.

There was an interesting ceremony before the tilting began, according to the programme.

"It hath been decreed by all ye laws of chivalry that every knight who will do bataille shall give his body to be searched by ye Abbot, that he hath not upon his person concealed a secret coat of mail that thereby he may better his adversary. His lance likewise shall be tested, if by any means he have the point thereof poisoned. This, therefore, shall be done by ye Abbot of Grâce Dieu, who in former years did tend our church."

When successive knights were slain, the by-play among the ladyes was touching, and the victor was rewarded by Queen Eleanor, who with pretty ceremony pinned her roses on his breast.

After the tournament the procession reformed, Queen Eleanor being escorted by her Knights to her Castle of Grosmont where she was in residence.

In the evening the Castle was brilliantly illuminated with coloured lanterns, while "Bengal lights" were burnt on the walls, casting a lurid glow over all and producing a most weird effect.

In a dark little cave in the Castle wall, lighted only by a small lamp, was cast the horoscope of many a fair dame and valiant knight. The waiting crowd ever increasing as the evening advanced, the thoughtful faces of those who had looked back with her into the past, all proved how successfully Miss Smith had acted the rôle of soothsayer.

IN THE MARCH WALL

Mrs. Bagnall Oakeley gave a most interesting sketch of the history of the Castle, which was necessary for the thorough enjoyment of all that succeeded, and was all too short.

The quaint old glees by the Queens, without accompaniment, were delightful, as was also Jack Point and Elsie Maynard's duet from *The Yeomen of the Guard*.

There was a performance in the open-air theatre in the Castle, the play chosen being *A Breezy Morning*, by Eden Phillpotts, which tells of a quarrel between a young couple while on their honeymoon in Wales.

The old church was beautifully decorated by the head gardeners of Blackbrooke, Hilston and Glen Monnow, and in it were displayed many objects of interest connected with both church and castle.

Mr. Stammers gave an organ recital and there was a vocal concert, both of which were much enjoyed.

Canon Harding gave an excellent address, explaining the object for which the fête was organised.

Here is the proclamation of Queen Eleanor :—" Ye roof and ye ancient chappelle of Syneffraid is in uter ruyne, ye tyle and ye timber thereof be roton and fallen into decay, ye royal ladyes will therefore that ye monies gotten on these days do be used for ye putting in sound state ye sacred place right dear to them in elder daies gone by ! "

The following is a list of the characters :

Ye Ladyes of Syneffraid

Morvydd, Princess of Gwent.

Constance, Daughter of the Conqueror.

Avice of Gloucester, John's first wife.

Isabella of Angoulême, John's second wife.

Maud de Breosa, Countess of Abergavenny.

Margaret of Scotland, Wife of de Burgh.

Gwladys, Daughter of Llewelyn.

Margaret, Daughter of Llewelyn.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Eleanor of Provence, Queen of Henry III.

Avelene, Wife of Edmund Cruxback.

Blanche, Queen of Navarre.

Maud, Countess of Lancaster.

Philippa of Hainault, Queen of Edward III.

Isabella, Duchess of Lancaster.

Matilda, Duchess of Lancaster, widow of Otto of Bavaria.

Blanche, Duchess of Lancaster, wife of John of Gaunt.

Ladies of Skenfrith in their own right :

Elizabeth de Burgh, Duchess of Clarence.

Constantia of Spain, Second wife of John of Gaunt.

Katherine Swinford, Third wife of John of Gaunt.

Ann Cecil, wife of John Morgan, last Governor of the Castle.

Mary Tudor, Queen of England.

Elizabeth, Queen of England.

Ye Lords of Syneffraid and other characters

Brian Fitz Count, First Norman Lord.

Hubert de Burgh, Crusader.

Harlowen, his Esquire.

Llewelyn, Prince of Wales.

William de Breosa, Lord of Abergavenny.

Edmund Cruxback, Earl of Lancaster (Third Son of Henry III).

Lionel, Duke of Clarence (Second Son of Edward III).

John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster (Third Son of Edward III).

Sir Walter Raleigh.

The Abbot of Grâce Dieu Priory.

Monks.

Jack Point and Elsie Maynard.

Jesters, Beef-eaters, etc.

IN THE MARCH WALL

THE LORDS OF SKENFRITH

“The Castle stands as stands a lofty mind,
Worn, but unstooping to the baser crowd,
All tenantless, save to the sighing wind.”

“The history of Skenfrith castle is so interwoven with that of Grosmont and Whitecastles that they must be taken together, as they appear to have been united from a very early period. Later they formed the celebrated “Trilateral” of Monmouthshire, and with the strongholds of Oldcastle and Longtown, were an important line of defence against the Welsh” (Mrs. Bagnall Oakeley).

“The importance of the position of Monmouthshire caused its occupiers at all early periods to fortify it to the best of their power, consequently we find many British and Roman encampments and castles of different dates of architecture.

“The castles of Grosmont, Monmouth and Skenfrith, as well as others in this district, testify to the power of the Barons, no less than to the stubbornness of the Welsh, to guard against whose incursions these castles were either built or restored. A double chain of fortresses existed as a protection, and we can trace to-day the ruins of some twenty-five in Monmouthshire alone.

“It is quite clear that early strongholds existed on the sites of all these castles, long before the present buildings were erected, though it is difficult to speak with any certainty of the age of these ancient earthworks. They were, however, earlier than the Norman invasion, and were probably the strongholds of Romano-British or Welsh chieftains” (Sir H. Mather-Jackson, *Pres. Antiq. Soc.*, 1896).

A tradition exists that the three castles were built anterior to the Norman Conquest, and that Grosmont was held by Aythan son of Cadivor ap Gwaithvoed Prince of Cardigan (who married the daughter of the King of Gwent)—and his brothers Gwen and Bach. Gwen is supposed to have given his name to White Castle (Gwen meaning White), and Bach the younger held Skenfrith. Though

THE CRUSADES AND LEPROSY

Aythian and his brothers may not have built the strongholds attributed to them, it is not improbable that they held land in the district which they had inherited from their ancestors.

BACH

is mentioned by Enderby as "Lord of Skenfrith."

BRIENTIUS DE L'ISLE

(Surnamed Fitz Count)

called also "Brien de Wallingford" (son of Count Allan Fergan Duke of Brittany), was one of the Norman chieftains, who accompanied William the Conqueror to England, wrested the castles from Aythan and Bach in 1066 and repaired and enlarged them. Fitzcount married Constance, daughter of the Conqueror, and was the first Crusader Lord of the Castles. Leyland tells us that, "seized with the religious frenzy of the times," he took the Cross, and went to fight the Saracens in the Holy Land, bequeathing his estates to his cousin Walter, Earl of Hereford. On his return from the Crusades, Fitzcount died and was buried in the Chapter House of Llanthony Abbey.

He had two sons, both of whom were afflicted with that terrible eastern disease, leprosy. The crusades are credited with being an important agent in spreading it, for during this time it made rapid strides through Europe, and it became necessary to make arrangements for the isolation of those affected. In England the first leper, or Lazar, house was established in Canterbury in 1096, and in 1472 no less than one hundred and twelve such houses existed. The two sons of Fitzcount were placed in the Priory in Abergavenny, and for their sakes he "made many and considerable benefactions to this house."

(Abergavenny—An Alien-Priory of Black Monks to the Abbey of St. Vincent in Maine, to which it was given by Hamelin Balun (temp. Will. Ruf., 1087 to 1100). It was not dissolved till the



Bach Lord of Skenfrith

BACH COAT-OF-ARMS

IN THE MARCH WALL

general suppression, at which time it was able to dispend £129 5s. 8d. Tanner's *Notitia Monastica*, 1695.)

The next mention we find of Skenfrith Castle is in the Pipe Roll of 9 Henry II (1162) (Herefordshire in Wales). New pleas and new agreements :

“ Hugh de Croft renders an account of the castles of Grosmund, Lentilian, and Scenefrid, which he has in custody, in the treasury £9, and he owes £14 7s. 10d., and he owes 105s. 9d. for the wages of the servants.

“ The same sheriff renders an account of the same debts, in payments to the knights and servants of the same castles, and in repairs of the houses £19 17s. 4d. by sale, and he owes 6s. 3d. by sale.”

HUBERT DE BURGH

Earl of Kent, twice Lord of the Three Castles, 1199 to 1206 and 1218 to 1243.

Born in the reign of Henry II, de Burgh was in the service of Richard Coeur de Lion, Chief Justiciar to King John, and Regent of the Kingdom during the minority of Henry III.

Spenser wrote of him in his *Fäerie Queene* :—

A gentle Knight was pricking on the plaine
Y cladd in mightie arms and golden shield,
Wherein old dints of deepe woundes did remaine,
The cruel marks of many a bloodie field.

And on his brest a bloodie crosse he bore,
The deare remembrance of his dying Lord,
For whose sweete sake, that glorious badge he wore
And dead, as living, ever Him adored.

Right faithfull true he was, in deede and word,
Yet nothing did he drede, but ever was y drad.

The arms of the de Burgh family are a bloody cross on a golden shield with the motto “ A Cruce salus.”

A KNIGHT OF COEUR DE LION

The tradition runs that at the siege of Ascalon, during the crusades, a de Burgh of that day slew the Saracen chief, and was himself dying when Richard Coeur de Lion rode up, and dipping his finger in the Christian blood, made the sign of the Cross on the golden shield of the Infidel, and gave that emblem to be borne as the arms of the de Burgh family with the motto "Salvation by the Cross" (*Records of the de Burgh family*).



DE BURGH
SHIELD

This would appear to be one of the earliest examples of heraldry. We find the following in Scott's *Ivanhoe* :—

"Heraldry had only its first rude origin during the crusades. Armorial bearings were then a novelty amongst the Norman chivalry themselves, and were totally unknown to the Saxons."

According to Foss (*Dict. of Judges*) Hubert de Burgh traced his ancestry to Charlemagne, from whose fifth son descended Harluin de Burgh who married Herleva or Arlotta, the mother of William the Conqueror, and had by her two sons, Odo, Bishop of Bayeux (for whose cathedral the famous tapestry was worked by the "spinsters" of England), and Robert, Earl of Moreton. Hubert was descended from the Earl of Moreton.

Hubert de Burgh was in the service of Richard Coeur de Lion and soon after the accession of John was appointed King's Chamberlain and Warden of the Welsh Marches, for the defence of which the King gave him a hundred Knights. In 1202 he obtained leave to fortify his castle of Dunster in Somersetshire.

The story of Hubert de Burgh's protection of Arthur of Brittany on receiving King John's command to mutilate and blind him, and turning John's messenger out of the castle, is based on the authority of the Chronicler Ralph of Coggeshall. John was relieved to find that his order had not been obeyed, and some of his Knights told him that if it had been, no man would have dared to hold a castle against the French King for fear of reprisals. Such is the story. Shakespeare has been less kind to the character of Hubert, for he

IN THE MARCH WALL

depicts him as having undertaken to carry out the sentence and yielding only to Arthur's entreaties :—

“ Well, see to live : I will not touch thine eyes
For all the treasure that thine Uncle owes :
Yet am I sworn, and I did purpose, boy,
With this same very iron to burn them out.”

Hubert was with the King at Runnymede and his name appears in the Great Charter as one of those by whose advice it was granted. In the same month (June 1215) his name first appears as Justiciar. On the landing of the French King in 1216, Dover Castle was placed in Hubert's keeping, and he successfully repelled a violent assault by the French. His defence is commemorated by his arms depicted in a window of Dover Town Hall.

On the accession of Henry III Hubert continued in the Office of Justiciar. In 1217 the success of the French invasion depended upon the arrival of reinforcements despatched in a large fleet under the command of Eustace the Monk, a well-known freebooter. Hubert urged William Marshal, Earl of Pembroke (the Regent) and Peter des Roches, Bishop of Winchester (the King's Guardian), to join him in attacking the French fleet. They refused, alleging their ignorance of naval matters. Hubert collected the ships of the Cinque Ports and picked out the best men of the Dover Garrison, charging those who were left that if he should be taken prisoner, to let him be hanged rather than deliver it up, for that it was “ the Key of England.” At the highest estimate Hubert's ships numbered sixteen large and twenty small while the French had eighty large and many smaller ships. The French fleet ran for the North Foreland before a stiff breeze. The English steered a slanting course, and, as soon as they were well to windward, bore down on the enemy and destroyed the rear ships. The rest of the French fleet, being to leeward, was powerless to help and was overcome in separate detachments. Not more than seventeen ships escaped, fifty-five were taken and the rest sunk. Eustace the Monk was

KING JOHN'S GRATITUDE

beheaded and no quarter was given except to nobles and knights for the sake of ransom. On landing, Hubert was met by a procession of nobles headed by five bishops, chanting and praising God. England was evacuated by the French and Hubert was the hero of the first great English victory at sea. There is an interesting account of this event, entitled "The Battle of Sandwich," in the *English Historical Review*, Vol. xxvii, p. 649.

In 1219, on the death of William Marshal, Hubert became Regent of the Kingdom. The King trusted him, but he was ultimately overthrown by the influence of the foreign magnates and the English nobles who were hostile, and the King, too, turned against him. In 1232 various charges were brought against him and he fled to sanctuary. He was dragged thence, imprisoned in the Tower and outlawed. In 1234 he was restored to favour. Again persecuted by the King in 1237, he completely established his innocence. Matthew Paris, writing in the middle of the thirteenth century, refers to him as one "whose long-tried faithfulness had so often saved England," and declared that he "bore all the King's ungrateful persecution and all his unworthy insults, nay, even all the assaults of fortune, with calm patience" (*Dict. of National Biography*).

Hubert de Burgh was faithful to John in all his troubles, yet in 1206 that ungrateful monarch deprived him of the castles of Skenfrith, Grosmont and Llantilio, and conferred them on

WILLIAM DE BRAOSE, 1206 to 1210, Lord of Abergavenny, who had married Maud de St. Valerie, and thus became lord of the castles of Hay and Brecknock. He owned great possessions in the Welsh Marches, and was one of the most powerful among the Lords Marchers.

The following is from the Patent Rolls of the 8th year of King John (from the Latin) :—

" Castle of Skenefrethe—
the King to Walter de Clifford—

" We command you that upon view of these letters, you deliver to

IN THE MARCH WALL

William de Braose, the Castle of Grosse Monte, the Castle of Skenefride, and the Castle of Lanteilo, with their appurtenances which we grant to him in the same way as that Hubert de Burgh held them



SEAL OF HUBERT DE
BURGH

(the Charter Roll adds 'by the service of two knights' fees') and you are to command the men of the fee of those castles' tenants that they be submissive to the said William, as they were to the said Hubert.

"Witness ourself at Dorchester. (18 December 1206.)"

(A "knight's fee" was so much land as would suffice to maintain him, and to enable him to present himself and his retainers ready equipped for the field in times of emergency. Those who did not wish to serve, paid a sum of money known as "scutage" (shield money) in lieu of service. In Henry III's reign the amount was three marks, equal to £2.)

A month after, William de Braose paid the fine which was customary before taking possession of the castles, the items of which we find given at length in the

Close Rolls, 25 Janry, 7 John (1206).

"William de Braose brought to us at Worcester on the morrow of St. Vincent,

100 marks in money
3 War horses
5 hunting horses
24 best bucks
10 greyhounds—

for the fine which he made with us, for the castles of Grossmonte, Skenefrid and Lanteilo. Therefore we command you that you cause him to be acquitted of so much."

DEALING WITH GUESTS AND NEIGHBOURS

This was a large sum in those days and equivalent to at least £10,000 at the present time (Mrs. Bagnall Oakeley).

"The fine which he made with us," does not refer to a payment in the nature of a penalty. De Braose would not expect to obtain the post without paying for it. It was presumed that after bargaining with the King, they made an end (*finem*) or agreement by which the price was fixed.

The King then paid off the accounts of the Castles.

Close Rolls, 7 John, M.3.

"The account of G. son of Peter Earl of Essex for £20 which he committed to Gerard de Camera, for our expenses 10 marks which he gave to Robert de Veteri Pont, for the expenses of the Queen, and 20 marks which he gave to Hug de Burg to fortify the castles of Grosse Mote, Lantel and Schenefrith.

Witness ourself at York 7 John 13 Feb. 1206."

"William de Braose was a typical Marcher of this day ; his first act on taking over his great inheritance was to invite to his castle of Abergavenny the neighbouring chieftain Seisyll ap Dyfnwal and other leading Welshmen, and murder them all in cold blood, killing afterwards with his own hands, Seisyll's infant son in the arms of his mother ; and yet de Braose, ruthless and grasping beyond his fellows, was like all the Norman barons, most scrupulous in his religious observances. It is told of him that he never passed a way-side cross without stopping in his talk to offer up a prayer. And he secured for his son Giles de Braose the Bishopric of Hereford " (Canon Bannister, *Herefordshire*).

Matthew Paris, the greatest and the last of our Monastic Historians, writing in 1210, tells us that "when Pope Innocent III excommunicated the realm of England, the king took as pledges of their future loyalty, 28 children of such nobles as he thought were disaffected to him. Hearing soon after, that some of these lords had again rebelled, he commanded the immediate execution of their sons, and it is reported that 'he would not go to dinner till they were hanged before his face.'"

IN THE MARCH WALL

John sent messages to de Braose, demanding his sons as pledges "to whom Maud his wife, being the reddier speaker, answered that the King who had proved so base a guardian to his nephew Prince Arthur, whom instead of settling him in his birthright he had deprived him of it, should have none of her children."

William de Braose fled with his wife and children to Ireland, and afterward "this most afflicted ladye did send to Queen Isabelle 400 kine and a bull, which yet could not obtain her pardon, nor pacify the King's wrath, but was afterward taken with her two sons and sent to Winsor Castle, where both she and her innocent children were famished to deth" (*Secret History of England*, 1702).

Her husband escaped to France where he died in 1211. He was succeeded in his feudal rights by his third son :

GILES DE BRAOSE 1211—1215

Bishop of Hereford,

who, after rebuilding much of the Cathedral and having been in exile with the other bishops during the five years of the Interdict, took advantage of the troublous times to recover from the constables who held them for the King, the Braose lands, which his father had lost eight years before. At the head of his retainers the bishop captured White Castle, Skenfrith and Abergavenny (Philott, *Diocesan History*).

"The duration of his Episcopate coincided very nearly with the reign of King John, to whom he was so determined an opponent that he entered into an alliance with Llewelyn against him" (Canon Bannister, *Herefordshire*). We have no particulars of Bishop Giles as Lord of Skenfrith, but it is an interesting fact that he inducted "John, son of Peter the Saracen, a Roman citizen," to the living of Skenfrith. Bishop Giles died in 1215 at Gloucester, leaving his estates to his brother :

REYNAULT DE BRAOSE,

1215 to 1216,

who had married the daughter of Prince Llewelyn by his first wife

THE WARDEN OF THE MARCHES

Tangwyste, daughter of Teywarch, lord of Rhos. "Reynault had received many favours from the Welsh, but he did agree with the King without the knowledge and consent of Llewelyn, who finding this, marched against him. Then Reynault did come to him with six knights in his company, and did desire his father-in-law to pardon him for this his offence, who received him lovingly, and did forgive him and gave him also the Castle of Senghewnyth." Thereupon the King confiscated his estates and gave the Castles to

JOHN DE MŌNE (Monmouth),
1216 to 1218.

In the Calendar of the Patent Rolls we find the following :—

"The King to all knights, freeholders, and others of the honour of the castles of Grosmut, Scenefrict and Lantelioc, greeting :— Know ye that we have re-granted to our beloved and faithful John de Mōne, the right which he claimed in the castles of Grosmut, Scenefrict, and Lantelioc, and therefore we command you to be submissive and helpful to the said John.

Witness ourself at Bristol the 20th of August 1216."

It does not appear when John de Mōne previously held the castle, but it is clear that he claimed it. King John died in the October following, and was succeeded by his son, Henry III, then only nine years of age, and the royal authority passed into the hands of William, Earl Mareschal.

John de Mōne was a noble and expert warrior, who was made general of the king's army and "ward of the Marches of Wales." After the death of Earl Mareschal (two years later) his son took up arms with Llewelyn against the king, and John de Mōne proceeded against them. The history of Matthew Paris reports it after this manner :

"Harm Hatch, Harm Catch."

"About the feast of John the Baptist, John de Mōne gathered a large army, meaning to engage the Earl Mareschal at unawares, but he being certified of it laid himself in a certain wood, intending to

IN THE MARCH WALL

deceive them that would do the like by him, and so set upon his enemies being unprovided, suddenly putting an infinite number of them to the sword. John de Mōne escaped by flight, and Earl Mareschal did spoil and plunder his country, with all villages and buildings, leaving nothing but what fire and sword could not destroy" (Dugdale's *Monasticon*).

John de Mōne founded the Abbey of Grâce Dieu in this county in 1226, and it is most interesting to notice that more than 60 years afterwards the advowson of the church of Skenfrith was given by Edmund Cruxback, son of Henry III (and confirmed by Edward I), to the Abbot and monks of Grâce Dieu "in frank-almoyn for the souls of Henry III his father, and Eleanor of Provençe his mother."

The Hospital of Holy Trinity, Monmouth, and the Hospital of St. John were also built by John de Monmouth, and were given by his son to the Benedictine Monastery of Monmouth.

It is said that Geoffrey of Monmouth, the great historian, who wrote in the twelfth century, was a relation of John de Mōne. Geoffrey was a Benedictine Monk, Archdeacon of Monmouth and Bishop of St. Asaph in 1151.

HUBERT DE BURGH

1218 to 1227

was now reinstated as Lord of the three castles.

In the Close Rolls is the following :—

3 Henry III M. 13. Indorso—

"The King to the sheriff of Hereford : Know ye that before the Archbishop of Canterbury and others ; Seisin of the castles of Grosse monte, Skenefreithe and Lantiliock was adjudged to Hugo de Burgo our Justice, by the default of Reginaldi de Breosa, against whom the said Hugo claimed the said castles as his right, therefore we command you that you cause the said Hugo to have seisin thereof without delay.

"Dated at the Tower of London 8th December 3 Henry III (1218)."

PENALTY OF CROSSING THE BORDER

On the death of William the Mareschal, Hubert was made Protector of England and Governor of the young King Henry III, whose coronation took place in Gloucester Cathedral. Arnold tells us that the Royal crown having been lost with John's jewels in the Wash, his mother (Isabella of Angoulême) took the golden bracelet from her arm, with which her boy was crowned.

De Burgh was in attendance, and a stained window in the Cathedral still remains, showing him at the right hand of the King, "Comes Kanice," at the head of the barons with drawn sword, and behind him three nobles in mail. Beneath, are his armorial bearings as Earl of Kent.

Skenfrith was a very important Border castle, strongly garrisoned and fortified against the Welsh, who were at this time very troublesome. In every frontier manor a gallows was erected, and if any Welshman passed the boundary line that was fixed between the two countries (this boundary was King Offa's dyke, which still exists in many places), he was immediately seized and hanged. Every town within the Marches had a horseman armed with a spear, who was maintained for the express purpose of taking these offenders, and if any Englishman was caught on the Welsh side he suffered a similar fate from them.

The following are interesting items from the Close Rolls :

"It is commanded to the sheriff of Hereford that the broad headed arrows which are in his keeping at Hereford, he do cause Hugo de Burgo our Justiciar to have 2,000 to be placed in his castle Skenefreithe, which the King gave him.

"Witness the King at St. Albans 14th April 8 Henry III (1224)."

(Similar entry two years later.)

"4,000 arrows to be sent by the sheriff of Hereford to the castle of Skenefreith, to be placed in the said castle."

The Government was now entirely in the hands of De Burgh and Stephen Langton. Bred in the school of Henry II, De Burgh's conception of good government lay in wise personal administration,

IN THE MARCH WALL

and in the preservation of law and order, but he combined with this a thoroughly English desire of national independence and a hatred of foreigners. He set himself at the head of national feeling against the admission of foreigners to wealth and high positions, and while he held power no serious effort was made to carry on foreign strife, or to waste English blood and treasure in continental struggles (Green, *Hist. of England*).

The following particulars are from a

“ Secret History of England, by a person of honour, collected from original manuscripts, private memoirs, and authentik historians (1702).”

“ Henry was never constant in his love nor in his hate, for he never had so great a favourite whom he brought not to disgrace, nor so great an enemy whom he received not again into favour, of which Hubert de Burgh, Earl of Kent, was an eminent instance, who was his Chief Justiciar for many years, but then turned out and prosecuted with the greatest rigour. For that he did dissuade a great lady from her marriage with the Kynge; for the King ‘ would fain espouse a Princess of Scotland whose elder sister had married his great minister de Burgh ’ ; —but the alliance was declined by the Scotch King (William)—as Henry believed at the instance of De Burgh and his wife. This formed the foundation for the insults and persecutions which followed; and the faithful friend and guardian was dismissed from office, and his estates confiscated ” (Articles of Impeachment—Speed).

“ The King ordered him to be seized, and although he took sanctuary in a chapel, he was dragged out and a smith commanded to put him into fetters.”

“ I will die any death,” said the smith, “ before I will put iron on the man who freed England from the stranger, and saved Dover from France.”

On the remonstrance of the Bishop of London, Hubert was replaced in the sanctuary, but hunger compelled him to surrender,

VICISSITUDES OF AN EARL

for although the King could not lawfully infringe the liberties of the sanctuary, he could cut off supplies of food and starve out the inmates, for he kept a guard round the abbey ; so De Burgh was thrown a prisoner into the Tower, and England was left to the rule of foreign favourites.

Matthew Paris tells us that when Hubert de Burgh was disgraced and committed to the Tower, the King, hearing of his great wealth (which was in the custody of the Templars), summoned to his presence the Master of the Temple, and endeavoured by threats and otherwise, to obtain from him the aforesaid money. The refusal, however, was unmistakable. "Money confided to them, in trust, they would deliver to no man without the permission of him who had entrusted it to be kept in the Temple." And so there it remained until the King had extorted an assignment of it from the imprisoned De Burgh when—"the King's clerk and the treasurer acting with him, found deposited in the Temple, gold and silver vases of inestimable price, and money and many precious gems, an enumeration whereof would in truth astonish all hearers."

In the Records of Devizes Castle occurs the following :—

"Hubert de Burgh, Earl of Kent, was incarcerated in the dungeons of this castle, but after a prolonged imprisonment he managed to escape. The Earl of Pembroke, who was much attached to Hubert, was in the castle at the time, and he carried the prisoner out on his shoulders (for the weight of De Burgh's irons impeded his movements) and bore him safely through the area of the castle thence to the ostium and with great difficulty across the fosse to the church."

His friends now armed De Burgh according to his rank and conducted him to the Border where he joined the revolted Barons, and strengthened their cause by his experience and influence, as well as by the sympathy excited by his injuries. They seem to have besieged Grosmont Castle, for Dugdale says :

"The King came with a great army and raised the siege ; subse-

IN THE MARCH WALL

quently the Royal troops met with disaster, for the King having marched against the insurgents, his provisions were cut off by them, and being unable to carry out his design he retreated to Grosmont, and encamped his troops in the vicinity of the castle. During the night a large party of the enemy's horse surprised them asleep in the trenches and carried away 500 horses, besides wagons, provisions and much treasure."

Hubert de Burgh, "the old Justiciary, died full of days on the 12th of May 1243 at Barnsted, and was buried in the House of the Black Friars in London, a convent he had enriched with many gifts, and above all with that of his noble palace standing not far from Westminster. This palace was bought from the monks, by Walter Grey, Archbishop of York, and sold to the King, who gave it the name of "Whitehall," which still remains.

After deposing Hubert de Burgh, Henry gave the three castles to :

WILLIAM DE BRAOSE, 1227 to 1228,

son of Reginald, but he also joined arms with Llewelyn, and Henry came against them with a large army. "The which William was taken prisoner and after cam out agayne in 1231." He offered for his ransom the country of Builth and a great sum of money besides, and was set at liberty. Now was peace concluded between Prince Llewelyn and the King. Whereupon the Prince did do him honour, but not as his king and his lord, and every party returned home. Llewelyn shortly afterwards having discovered that De Braose had behaved very treacherously towards him, succeeded in getting him into his power, and overcome by jealousy hanged him on a tree before his own castle windows.

The King, instead of punishing Llewelyn, showed his sympathy with him, by bestowing the castle of Skenfrith upon

JOHN DE BRAOSE, 1228,

who had married Margaret, daughter of Llewelyn and Princess Joan (sister of the King).

A GIFT TO KING EDWARD I

Charter Roll 12 Henry III (1228).

“Grant by the King to John de Braose of the manors of Gros-mund, Skenefrit, and Lentilioc, in Wales, with the advowsons of the churches and all other appurtenances, to be held by the service of one knight’s fee and a half.”

Some years afterwards John was killed by falling from his horse. “His foot stuck fast in the stirrup, and he was dragged till he died most miserably.”

“Henry then took possession of the castle and gave it into the custody of Peter Rigval, to hold until Margaret (the widow of John) should deliver up her two sons, William and John. This she refused to do, and none of her family ever had anything to do with the property afterwards” (Mrs. Bagnall Oakeley).

The next record we have of the castle is that

ROBERT ap HOWELL

held of Henry III the office of Constable of the castle of Scenfroth, in the Marches of Wales, parcel of the Duchy of Lancaster, with that of Master Sergeant of the Lordship of Monmouth, White-castle, Skinfroth and Grosmont for the term of his life with “wages and fees accustomed.”

How long Robert ap Howell held the office does not appear, but in or about the year 1249 the King gave the castles to his eldest son, Edward I. In 1249 there was an enquiry (which has been given in a previous section) at which the jurors give the value of the castle and manor.

The following is from a Duchy of Lancaster Royal Charter given at London, 30 June 1267.

“Edward eldest son of the King of England to all etc.

“Know ye that we in the presence of the said lord the King our father have surrendered into his hands to the use of Edmund our brother our castles of Grosemund Skenefrith and Blaunc Chastell which our said father first gave to us, and which in our presence he gave to the said Edmund and his heirs for ever, we willing that he

IN THE MARCH WALL

should have the same, with all lands tenements knights fees, advowsons of Churches and liberties as freely as we held them." We find in the Duchy of Lancaster Ancient Deeds that Durante de Tyddeworth was made Steward of the castles this year (1267).

EDMUND CRUXBACK

1267 to 1292

Edmund Cruxback, second son of Henry III (so called not from any physical deformity but from the cross he wore as a Crusader), Earl of Lancaster and Lord High Steward of England, received from his father in addition to the castles, "All other lands of John de Mōne" and "all the lands of Earl Ferrars, Earl of Derby, and Simon de Montford, Earl of Leicester, who had rebelled against him." His father gave him discharge of a debt due to the crown of £1,767 4s. 5d., being a sum owed by John de Mōne and for which the castle and honour of Monmouth were liable.

In 1277 Edmund Cruxback was pressed for the debts of Hubert de Burgh (whose property Henry III had confiscated):

Duchy of Lancaster. Great Coucher Book 17 Edward I. By the grace of God etc.

"Whereas our brother Edmund holds the gift of the Lord King Henry our father of the castles of Skenfrythe Grosse Mont and Blaunk Castell which were of Hubert de Burgh, and whereas certain debts are demanded from our said brother by summons of the Exchequer on account of the debts which the said Hubert owed to the said exchequer for him and his ancestors. We of our special will grant that our said brother and his heirs, shall be quit for ever of all the debts, fines, amercements, accounts and arrears whatsoever which are, or might be demanded of him on account of the debts of the said Hubert and his ancestors, saving nevertheless to us and our heirs the right to recover, if the said castles should happen to come into the hands of any others except the said Edmund or his heirs.

Witness ourself at Westminster 13th May 1277."

ROYAL MARRIAGES AT WESTMINSTER

That Edmund was in residence at Grosmont after the Lordship of the castles was presented to him by his father, is evident from a charter granted by him to the Prior of Llangua and dated at Grosmont 2nd of May 1268. Edmund married Aveline, heiress of William Earl of Albemarle, on the 12th of April 1270 in Westminster Abbey just before his departure to fight in the Holy Land. His young wife died before his return, within a year of her marriage, and was buried with much pomp in the Abbey, near the great Altar. (The next Royal marriage in the Abbey was that of Princess Mary in 1922.)

After his return from the Crusades Edmund founded an Abbey for Nuns of the Order of Santa Clara in the Minories (London), in memory of his wife.

Edmund died in 1292 leaving a command that his body should not be buried till all his debts were paid.

The following items from the household accounts of Earl Thomas (eldest son of Edmund Cruxback) give the prices of provisions at that time (1296).

	£	s.	d.
Best grass fed ox alive	16	0	
Best grain fed ox alive	1	4	0
Best cow alive and fat	12	0	
Best hog two years old.....	3	4	
Best shorn mutton alive	1	2	
Best goose fat		3	
Best capon fat		2½	
Best hen		1½	
Chuckettstwo for		1½	
Young pidgeons.....three for		1	
Twenty eggs		1	

IN THE MARCH WALL

Edmund Cruxback was succeeded by his surviving (second) wife :

BLANCHE

DOWAGER QUEEN OF NAVARRE, 1292 to 1296,

the daughter of Robert, Count of Artois. By her he had three sons, the eldest, Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, was beheaded by Edward II, and the second, Henry, inherited his brother's estates. At his father's death he obtained possession of Monmouth and White Castles, and his mother retained Grosmont and Skenfrith.

The following is from the Patent Rolls of Edward I :

“ Commission of oyer and terminer to John de Havering Justice of North Wales and Walter de Pemberton Justice of West Wales, on complaint of the Prior of Llanthony Priory in Wales, that Gilbert de Bohun, and some men of Cruchowel came to his houses and lands in the parts of Ewyas, and took and led away a large number of beasts and other goods and detained them. The Sheriff of Hereford, the bailiffs of Henry de Lancaster, of Monmouth, and of Albo Castro, and the baliffs of Blanche Queen of Navarre, of Grosmont and of Skenefreythe, are commanded to provide juries.”

.

Henry, Earl of Lancaster, inherited the castles of Grosse Mont and Skenefreith after the death of his mother :

HENRY DE LANCASTER

1296 to 1345

“ The king took homage of Henry de Lancaster, son of Edmund Cruxback (brother of the King) deceased, of the castle, town and honour of Monmouth and of the castles of Grosse Monte Skenefrith and Albo castle.” (Originalia Rolls 25th of Edward I, 1296.)

Henry was charged to provide a hundred foot soldiers out of his lands in Wales.

The vast possessions with which the Earl was loaded laid the future greatness of the House of Lancaster, and to this unlimited wealth is

A GREAT SOLDIER AND SAILOR

to be referred the origin of the great contentions that existed between the Houses of York and Lancaster under the name of the "Wars of the Roses."

Henry died in 1345 leaving six daughters (Maud married William, Earl of Ulster, grandson of the great Hubert de Burgh, Lord of Grosmont, Skenfrith and White Castles).

The Earl's only son was

HENRY de GROSMONT

1345 to 1361,

First Duke of Lancaster,

who was born at Grosmont castle and succeeded to the castles of Skenefreythe and Alba and the Manor of Ebboth. With the consent of all the prelates and peers sitting in Parliament he was made Duke of Lancaster, sixth of March, 1351, and was henceforward called "The good Duke." The only previous creation of Duke in England was that of the Prince of Wales as Duke of Cornwall. Grosmont seems to have been a favourite residence of the Earls of Lancaster, particularly of Henry de Grosmont. He probably much enlarged and beautified the structure, as the style of architecture accords with the era in which he flourished. In 1347 Edward III instituted the order of the Garter, and Henry de Grosmont was the first Knight Companion (next to the King and Prince Edward, the Black Prince).

Henry de Grosmont was one of the commissioners appointed at the Siege of Calais to arrange terms of peace. He had his own retinue of 800 men at arms and 2,000 archers, and had expended in the wars of France alone £17,000, besides the pay he had from the King, and he took in those wars 42 towns and castles. He was appointed Admiral of the King's fleet, and his name may also be added to the list of Skenfrith's Crusaders for he "obtained the King's permission to fight the Infidels in the Holy Land," and is said to have fought in Rhodes, Cyprus, and other places while a young man.

IN THE MARCH WALL

“ From Egypt, perhaps from still farther East, then doubtless as now the centre of infection, came rolling over Europe, the dark cloud of pestilence,”—

This pestilence was emphatically called the “ Black Death ” from its effect upon the human body. Every household in London was smitten and some were wholly exterminated. Three Archbishops of Canterbury were enthroned only to be carried to the tomb ; and at Westminster Abbey the Abbot and twenty-six of his community were committed to a common grave in the southern cloister. Nor did the Royal family escape. Amongst its earliest victims was the gallant Henry, Duke of Lancaster. The King never lost a better friend, whose strong sense and sturdy arm had saved the house of England in many a perilous moment. Nor was the Good Duke an unlettered man. He had written a book of devotional reflections named “ Mercy Gramercy ” which was very highly prized in its time. The Duke died on the 24th of March 1361 and was buried with great state at Leicester with his father (Gasquet, *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries* ; B. C. Hardy, *Philippa of Hainault and her times*).

Two months after his death an enquiry was held touching his possessions : “ And the jurors say that Henry Duke of Lancaster held from the King (Edward III) the Castle and demesne of Skenefrith with all appurtenances and rights in the said Marches of Wales and they say that the castle and demesne are worth £48 6s. 2d. per annum ” (Gregson, *Duchy Lanc.*).

The Duke married Isabella, daughter of Lord Beaumont, and left two daughters, Matilda and Blaunch—co-heiresses—Duchesses of Lancaster.

.
MATILDA (or Maud),

DUCHESS OF LANCASTER, 1361 to 1362,

“ Matilda the elder was married twice, first to Ralph, eldest son of Ralph, Earl of Stafford, and secondly, in 1352, when she

SKENFRITH'S LORDS, ENGLAND'S RULERS

was only nineteen, to William, Count of Holland, son of the Emperor Lewis of Bavaria, who was made (by courtesy only) Earl of Leicester and Steward of England. He became insane in 1358 and died shortly after, when Matilda returned to England. On her father's death in 1361 she received the moiety of his inheritance."

In the Originalia Rolls we find the following :—

(35th Edward III, 1361).

"The King has assigned to his kinswoman Matilda the manors of Tyberton etc., and the castles and Lordships of Monmouth and Skenefrythe, Alba Castle etc."

Matilda died in 1362, and the whole of her property then passed to her sister,

BLANCHE, DUCHESS OF LANCASTER,

in her own right. Having obtained the Pope's special dispensation, she married John of Gaunt, fourth son of Edward III, on the 19th of May 1359, and thus "the castles of Monmouth, Grass Mont, Skenefrith and Blanche castle in the marches of Wales" fell to John in 1362, and he was declared in Parliament Duke of Lancaster, when the King girt him with a sword and placed upon his head a circlet of gold and pearls and created him Duke of Lancaster and Lord High Steward of England.

Though John of Gaunt never resided at Grosmont, he was there on several occasions, probably for the purpose of hunting; on one occasion he remained for a week (Colonel Sir Joseph Bradney, C.B., *Hist. of Monmouth*).

It was strange that two Lords of Grosmont and Skenfrith should each for a time virtually govern England: Hubert de Burgh (during the minority of Henry III), and John of Gaunt, who "wielded the actual power of the crown, for Edward III was fast sinking into his dotage and eventually died of softening of the

IN THE MARCH WALL

brain." Therefore John, "during the time hys father did lye in hys sickness, did in al things what liked hym" (Strut, *Royal Antiquities*).

The good Duke was soon followed to the grave by his beautiful daughter Blanche, also a victim of the "Black deth." Her little son, Henry, was only two years old when "that most excellent ladye his mother" was taken from him.



SOUVEIGNE
VOUS DE MOY

On her death bed she confided him to the care of her lady in waiting, Catherine Swynford, in whose charge he remained for some years.

It is interesting to remember that when Blanche's son as Duke of Hereford was banished from England for ten years by his cousin Richard II, to keep his place in the hearts of the people during his exile, he adopted as his badge the "Forget me not," the emblem of constancy and love, adding the jewelled flower to the ornamentation of his golden collar with the initial letter of his watchword "Souveigne vous de moy," thus rendering it the symbol of remembrance, and, like the subsequent fatal roses of York and Lancaster, an historical flower. Henry was perhaps partly indebted to the agency of this little blossom for the Crown of England—for on his return, the country made his cause its own, and placed him on the throne as Henry IV.



Geoffrey Chaucer, the "Father of English poetry, that most worshipful man who should be remembered," was intimately connected with the lives of the Duke and Duchess. He married Philippa Roet, sister of Catherine Swynford. On the death of Blanche he wrote his first ode in her memory, for his patron, John of Gaunt :

BADGE OF
JOHN OF
GAUNT

A POEM OF CHAUCER
THE BOKE OF THE DUCHESSE
OR
THE DETHE OF BLANCHE

For all the worlde, so hadde she
Surmountede hem all of beauté,
Of maner, and of comelynesse,
Of stature, and of so wel sette gladnesse.

* * * *

She hadde so stedfaste countenance,
So noble porte and mayntenaunce.

* * * *

I sawgh hir daunce so comelely,
Carole and synge so swetely,
Lawghe and pleye so womanly
And loke so debonairly
So goodely speke and frendly
That certes y trowe that evermore
Has seyne so blysful a tresore
For every heer upon hir hede,
Soth to seyne nyt was not rede,
Ne nouthur yelowé ne broune hyt was :
Me thoghte most lyke gold hyt was.

* * * *

I have no witte that kan suffyse,
To comprehende hir beauté.

* * * *

And every day hir beauté newed.

IN THE MARCH WALL

And yet more over, thogh alle thoo
That ever leved were now alyve,
Ne sholde han founde to diskryve
Ne al hir face a wikked sygne,
For hit was sad, symple, and benygne.

“ She was buried in St. Paul’s church of London.”

In the city of Hereford the pestilence is said to have been retarded by the pious expedient of carrying in procession the Shrine of St. Thomas, the recently canonised bishop.

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In 1399 “old John of Gaunt, time honoured Lancaster, fell sick, wherupon he dyed, whose death was greatly sorrowed of all his friends and lovers, for he was much distinguished for his humanity and courteous behaviour.”

In the reign of Henry IV. Owain Glendwr defeated the English at Monmouth (1402) and pursued them to the very gates of the town. He then burned and destroyed all before him, all forts and castles and places of strength. Skenfrith castle probably suffered with the rest.

The following is from the Norman-French—Henry V, Duchy of Lancaster Records :

Howell ap Thomas—

“ Know ye that whereas Thomas Andrew having of our grant the office of Master Sergeant of Monmouth, Skenfrythe, Grosse Monte and White castle (Blanc Chastell) wishes to leave the same to the end that we would grant it to Howell ap Thomas We of our special grace and for the good service which the said Howell has done, and will do to us, and because the said Thomas Andrew has restored to us Our Letters Patent to be cancelled, have granted

DECLINE OF BORDER WARFARE

to the said Howell the said office for the term of the life of the said Andrew with all the fees, wages and customs, to the said office belonging—Given 12th day June 1418.”

Thomas Andrew—

“ Know ye that we of our special grace, and for the good and agreeable service that Thomas Andrew one of the grooms of our chamber has rendered to us, have granted to the said Thomas, the office of porter of our castle of Skenfrythe for the term of his life, with all the fees, wages and customs to the said office belonging. (15 June 1418.)”

WILLIAM MALTHUS

LAST CONSTABLE OF SKENFRITH CASTLE.

Two years later the following grant was “ given at Westminster ” (*Duchy of Lancaster Records*).

William Malthous.

“ Know ye that we of our special grace have granted to William Malthous esquire the office of Constable of our castle of Skenfrythe and the office of Sergeant of Monmouth, White castle and Grosemonde which were occupied by Thomas Foulere while he lived—to hold during our pleasure with the fees and wages to the said offices belonging notwithstanding that the said William has of our grant 3d. a day for the office of forester of Wyndesore (Windsor) and 7 marks annuity from the town of Watlyngton.”

After this time the Border Castles were no longer fortified as the Border warfare ceased after Henry V, and there is no record of their having taken any part in the Wars of the Roses, though it is likely that the walls may have suffered during this time, for Monmouth was a Lancastrian stronghold, and when Edward IV came to the throne, he ordered all the castles of the Duke of Lancaster in Monmouthshire to be destroyed.

IN THE MARCH WALL

There is no record of any event of interest connected with the castles until the sixteenth century when

JOHN MORGAN,

who represented the Monmouthshire Borough in Mary's Parliament, was Steward of the Duchy of Lancaster, and the last Governor of the three castles. (He is buried in Skenfrith Church. See section on the Church.)

The castles became merged in the Crown, and devolved with



It makes us pause—
And think on elder daies—
Gone bye

the rest of the Lancastrian property till the year 1825, when they were purchased by

HENRY SOMERSET,

Sixth Duke of Beaufort

(Descended from Catherine Swynford, third wife of John of Gaunt).

IN MODERN TIMES
HENRY, NINTH DUKE,
in 1892—sold

White Castle to Sir Henry Mather-Jackson, Bart.,
of Llantillio Court.

Grosmont Castle to Colonel Lucas Scudamore,
of Kentchurch Court.

Skenfrith Castle to Robert Newton Jackson,
of Blackbrooke, in 1899.

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Skenfrith Castle was carefully repaired and strengthened in 1914.

IN THE MARCH WALL

CHAPTER II

Section

- 6 *Grosmont Castle (contemp. with Skenfrith)*
 and
 7 *Llewelyn the Great—1194-1240 ;*
 8 *Eleanor of Provence (said to have built the Church) ;*
 9 *The Red Rose of Lancaster (origin of) ;*
 10 *Grosmont Church ;*
 11 *John of Kent (died 1348) ;*
 12 *Owen Glendwr (died 1415).*

SECTIONS 6 AND 7

GROSMONT AND LLEWELYN

“Beneath these battlements within these walls
Power dwelt amid her passions in proud state.
Each haughty chief upheld his armed halls
Doing his iron will.”

Grosmont Castle is composed of a court of irregular plan, entered by a bridge with covered way ; there are traces of grooves for a portcullis, and two holes to receive the wooden bar for fastening the gate. Outside the ditch, which is of considerable depth, to the east and south, is a large demi-lune or platform of earth, upon which there are traces of walls and of a defence of the nature of a barbican. On the left of the entrance the curtain extends to the south-east drum tower ; from this a strong curtain wall extends to the south-west tower ; between these two towers were buildings—probably barracks. Outside the west curtain are some buildings in ruinous condition in which is a fireplace, the flues of which are in an elegant octagonal chimney shaft.

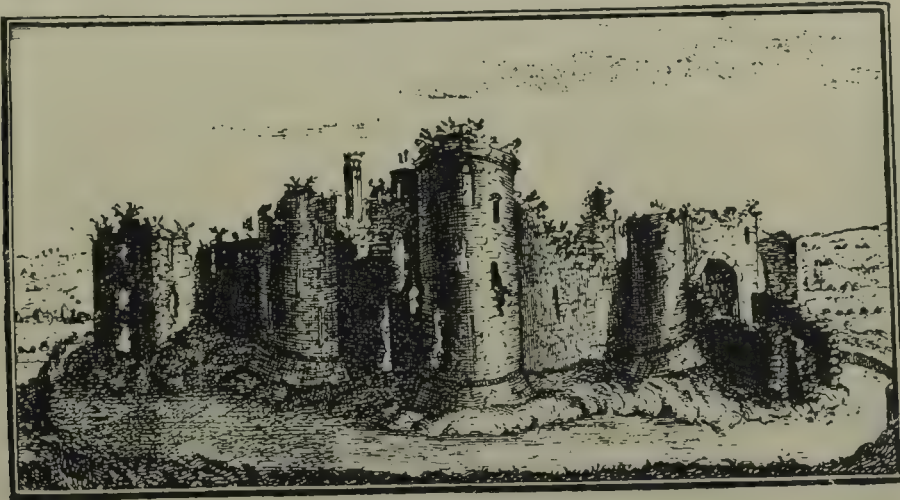
The ruins are in fairly good preservation. We can see the shell of the great hall, 80 feet by 27 feet, with its spacious fireplace in

CASTLES IN RUINS

the east wall. There are three windows at each end, and four at each side, some of them probably giving light to the withdrawing room.

The graceful octagonal chimney shaft of Queen Eleanor's private room still remains in wonderful preservation, surmounted by a carved coronet standing high and isolated, amid the crumbling walls.

Edward IV ordered all the castles of the Duke of Lancaster in Monmouthshire to be "sleighted and made untenable."



[From an old print.]

GROSMONT CASTLE.

In the 5th of Elizabeth (1563) particulars are given by a Duchy of Lancaster special commission :

"The Castle of Grosmont lackyth a bridge. It hath been a most fayre castle, and well and strongly buylded, butt nowe in utter ruyne and decay, savyng the utter walls thereof ; and of late yeres part thereof hath byn covered, som with tyle, and som with leed, and nowe the tyle, tymbor, iron, and leed is rotten or takken away, and especially the barres of iron of the wyndows, and dores whereof late broken owte and takken away."

("The White Castell is in utter ruyne and decay and almost overgrown with bussches and thornes so that it is, bothe without the castell and within, like a wilderness.")

IN THE MARCH WALL

In the reign of James I, the castles were reported as "ruinous and decayed out of the memory of man."

A terraced castle in the moon's pale light,
By treacherous moat encircled, mirk and deep,
A pine wood sighing softly, drowned in sleep,
A slim tower ghost-like in the silent night.



ELEANOR'S TOWER

Skenfrith, Grosmont and White Castles formed the celebrated "Trilateral" of Monmouthshire, and to a certain extent their history is the same. They were in the gift of the King and had the same lords, of whom particulars have been given under "Lords of Skenfrith" (Section 5).

The Norman Lords settled on the borders of Wales early acquired the title of "Lords Marchers" ("Marchiones Marchiae Walliae" in the Red book of the Exchequer) long before the title of Marquis (introduced in the reign of Richard II) existed among the nobility of England. The Lords Marchers were for many years the most powerful of the English nobles; they married into the Royal family and aspired even to the Crown of England. They erected a chain of castles from the Severn to the Dee, both for aggressive and defensive purposes, and between them and their Welsh neighbours there was nothing but hostility. Welshmen plundered the English, and Englishmen slaughtered the Welsh, whenever they could come up with them in the hills.

Grosmont had had her fighting times long before Henry III came to the throne; but this period is the most interesting in her history. Prince Llewelyn ap Iorwerth and Hubert de Burgh

DAUGHTERS OF LLEWELYN

were contemporary with Henry, and were closely connected with him; they were the "heroes of a hundred fights" in Grosmont and in its neighbourhood.

Llewelyn, King of North Wales, was a constant source of trouble to Henry. The fact that his history is so interwoven with our immediate neighbourhood and two of his daughters married Lords of Grosmont, Skenfrith and White Castles, will make a few particulars about him interesting.

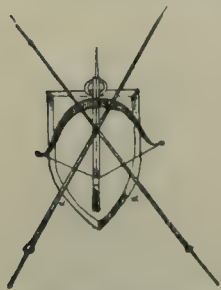
IN THE MARCH WALL

LLEWELYN the GREAT.

“ Truest friend and noblest foe.”

“ Full many a noble war-song he has sung.”

A halo of romance seems to encircle the very name of Llewelyn (the Lion heart) which in a great measure may be ascribed to the influence of the Welsh bards upon the romantic and passionately patriotic Cymry. The Court of Llewelyn was crowded with these singers—poet after poet sang of : “ The eagle of men, towering above the rest of men with his long red lance.”



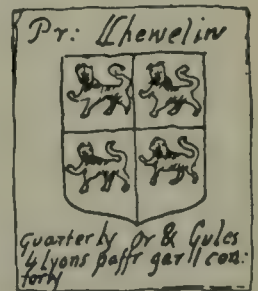
CROSSBOW AND
SHIELD OF
LLEWELYN
(GROSMONT)

Mysterious prophecies floated from lip to lip, giving form once more to the undying hope of the restoration of the Cymri (Green, *History of England*).

“ Tender-hearted, wise, witty, ingenious, Llewelyn was the idol of his people ; the great Caesar, who was to gather beneath his sway the broken fragments of the Celtic race. Even the costume of the bards had its significance. ‘ A sky blue robe as an emblem of peace.’ ‘ A unicoloured garment, for the truth is unicoloured ’ ” (Owen, *Anglesea*).

“ Their harp or ‘ Telyn ’ was, until the fifteenth century, strung with maiden’s hair (then, as now), of three distinct rows of strings, and without pedals ” (Hone, *Year Book*).

“ By their bards, each mighty deed was immortalised and sung to the people. Each figure as it moves across the poet’s canvas is bright with glancing colour. Everywhere there is oriental profusion of gorgeous imagery which is never oppressive. The sensibility of the Celtic temper, so quick to perceive beauty, so eager for life and its emotions, its adventures, its sorrows and its joys, is tempered by a passionate melancholy : the wildest extravagance of the tale is



ARMS OF
LLEWELYN

HISTORY VIVA VOCE

relieved by some graceful lay of pure fancy, some tender note of true feeling, some magical touch of beauty. But side by side with the wayward stream of poesy and of romance, ran a torrent of intenser song. Every fight, every hero, had his verse, and the spirit of patriotism received its strongest inspiration from this verse of song."

"In the day of judgment no other race, no other tongue than that of the Cymri, should answer for that corner of the earth.

"Their lord they will praise,
Their speech they will keep,
Their land they will lose,
Except wild Wales."

(Hughes, *Church of the Kymri*.)

"The Druids committed none of their opinions to writing, but transmitted them to posterity by oral tradition, obliging their scholars to learn them by heart, and for the better retention of them in their memory, they employed their bards to turn them into verse. Thus the bards became the historians of Wales, and notwithstanding the distant period of the cessation of this religious order, many of their verses are still known" (Owen, *Anglesea*).



WELSH BARD

The reign of Llewelyn ap Jorwerth lasted from 1194 to 1240. As a Prince of North Wales, he was recognised at the English Court; though the Welsh princes had long been considered by the English kings as vassals, they had maintained their independence in the mountainous districts.

King John commissioned Hubert de Burgh and 100 Knights to protect the Marches. Llewelyn was his most powerful foe, but de Burgh eventually succeeded in concluding a treaty with him, and Llewelyn swore fidelity to the King, and to ratify this peace,

IN THE MARCH WALL

John gave him his daughter, the Princess Joan, to wife. This for a time had the effect of softening the animosities which disturbed the peace of the two kingdoms. Shortly after this, John died, and we find Llewelyn frequently engaged in hostilities with his brother-in-law Henry III, though the latter always seemed anxious to conciliate him.

On the 1st of May 1220 Henry wrote to Llewelyn inviting him to meet him at Shrewsbury, but the Prince sent excuses for not attending, and we find Henry there again on the 7th of May, and on the 9th the King returned, not having seen Llewelyn, who was preparing to invade the lands of William de Braose (Lord of Abergavenny) with a powerful army.

The King appeared on the Border again in August and visited Skenfrith castle on the 19th.

Early the following year, 1221, the Welsh seemed once more to have assumed a threatening attitude ; and we find the King again at Skenfrith from the 4th to the 7th of March (Mrs. Bagnall Oakeley).

Close to Skenfrith, rising from the Llanrothal valley, "Graig Llewelyn" runs up sharp against the sky. In an old map this hill is called "Grâce Llewelyn" and it is not unlikely that here, during his visit to the castle, the King extended "Grâce à Llewelyn" and peace was signed, for his sympathies were entirely with his brother-in-law, and he gave the castle of Skenfrith to John de Braose, who had married Llewelyn's daughter (by the Princess Joan).

Henry and Llewelyn continued to be on friendly terms till 1228, when the Princess Joan died, thus severing the only bond between them.

The death of his wife was a great grief to Llewelyn, for "except in the misunderstanding caused by the unfortunate William de Braose, she lived happily with her husband, was an amiable woman, and kept the peace between him and the King."

She was buried upon the sea-shore in the island of Anglesea

PRINCESS JOAN'S COFFIN

(at Llanfaes) "as her pleasure was, and the Prince did build a house of barefoot fryers over her grave."

When this monastery was ready to fall into ruins, King Henry V (of Monmouth) restored it, and provided that there should always be in it eight friars. There Princess Joan lay at rest for two hundred and ninety-three years, till Henry VIII (who may justly be said to have murdered the living, and plundered the dead) disposed of the monastery to one of his courtiers, when it was converted into a barn, which still remains.

"Princess Joan was ejected from her narrow tenement. Her coffin of stone was placed in a small brook, and there lay for 250 years longer, and was used as a watering trough for horses. It is now carefully preserved, and may be seen in the Park of Baron Hill, Anglesea.

"After the death of Joan, hostilities were again renewed. In 1229 the King withdrew the title of Prince of Wales, reducing Llewelyn to 'Prince of Aberffrau'" (Enderbie, *Cambria*).

In 1233 Henry sent the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishops of Rochester and Chester to make peace with the Prince; they, however, returned without being able to do so, and Henry ordered 3,000 "Quarel" (small iron arrows used in cross bows) to be sent to Grosmont castle, as weapons in case of an unexpected attack by the Welsh.

De Burgh, who had been imprisoned by Henry at Devizes, made his escape, and joined Llewelyn in the Marches in the well known war against the King. The Marchers and Llewelyn, who came nearer to heading a united Wales than any prince before or after him, then made common cause; against them came the King with a large army, mainly foreigners, and occupied Hereford. He then



JOAN'S TOMB

IN THE MARCH WALL

moved on to Grosmont, and his army camped round the town and castle while the King lay inside, all of them, however, confident in their numbers. But at daybreak on the feast of St. Martin, the Marchers and the Welsh fell upon the Royal troops and hapless foreigners, asleep in the trenches, who abandoned everything with such precipitation that there seems to have been very little bloodshed. The wealth of the spoil probably stopped pursuit ; for the entire baggage of the army with all the King's money and provisions, as



LLEWELYN'S
SILVER HARP

well as 500 horses, were taken—everything, in fact, but the royal person, which was safe in the castle keep. Many even of the King's friends fled down the hill to Monnow (Bradley, *March and Borderland*). What a sight that great stampede must have been from the top of Garway Hill on that November morning !

A year later (1234) a treaty was signed by Llewelyn, and during the remainder of his life his transactions with the English monarch were of a more peaceful character.

In 1240 Llewelyn the Great, "the most valliant and noble Prince, passed out of this transitory life, and was honourably buried in the Abbey of Conway, after he had governed Wales worthily for 56 years."

At the time of the dissolution of the monasteries, his stone coffin was removed from Conway, and placed in Llanrwst church, where it may now be seen (From an old Welsh book called *Prydnawn-gwaith-y-Cymru*, 1804).

Llewelyn ap Gruffyd continued the Border War under Edward I.

A PRINCE LOVED AND FEARED

LLEWELYN'S EPITAPH

"Here lyeth he that terrified the English, and Wales did most gallantly defend."

"LLEWELYN"

Prince of North Wales
The Bulwark, the Jewel of his time,
The flower of Kings past,
The Pattern for future ages,
The Captain, the Light,
The Beauty, and the Law of his People.

Hushed is the voice,
The broken harp unstrung
And silent now.

* * * *

The following extracts are from an "interesting document" which was discovered among the unsorted records then in the "White Tower," translated by the Rev. J. Brand, a former secretary of the Society of Antiquaries.

"The wages of soldiers and officers of the Royal household are detailed under their proper heads, also a great variety of curious items, being expenses at Rhuddlan Castle, head quarters of the King during his expedition against Llewelyn."

In almost every case the Saints' days are given, instead of the date, thus :—

"Friday (next after the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary), paid to Master R. Gifford for wages of 1040 archers, 10 constables, 52 captains of Twenties (from the Thursday next after the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, to the

IN THE MARCH WALL

Wednesday after the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, each day being reckoned) ” :

	£	s.	d.
Tuesday, the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, paid for six elles of web cloth and six elles of strong linen, for pennons and Welsh standards for Ewyas and for making the same ...	0	13	4
Wages for fifteen carpenters and shoeing smiths, for seven days	1	14	0
To Gwyallam and his cross-bowmen, for their wages for twenty-one days at 2d. a day	1	10	0
To Richard the forester going to catch rabbits for the King's table, for his wages, and for the keeping of his ferrets for fourteen days	0	3	6
To a certain female spy, a gift to buy her a house...	1	0	0

Tradition states that Grosmont castle was bombarded and destroyed by some portion of Cromwell's army, but historians assert that this was not so, as the castle had been "sleighted and made untenable" by Edward IV.

Tradition is often right, and it does not seem impossible that it could have been put into a temporary condition of defence by Royalists, cannon being employed to reduce it speedily. It is an undoubted fact that cannon balls have been found buried in the hedgerows and elsewhere. If not used against the castle, how came they there? Cannon are first mentioned in England in 1338, and were used by the English at the siege of Cambray in 1339 (*Encyc. Brit.*). Sir James Turner, a distinguished soldier of Cromwell's time, says (1649), "The double cannon, she weighs 8000 of metal, and shoots a bullet of 60 to 63 pound; and the whole cannon weighs 7000 pounds of metal, and shoots a bullet of 38 to 40 pound." One cannon ball of cast iron found in Skenfrith castle weighs 17 lb., and is $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches in diameter. Two found at Blackbrooke weigh $6\frac{1}{2}$ lb. each, and are $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches in

THE PRINCE OF WALES FEATHERS

diameter. In the civil wars Grosmont played no particular part, though the King's Horse Guards came here from Hereford. King Charles I passed through the parish 1st July 1645, on his way to Abergavenny, following the main road (Colonel Sir Joseph Bradney, C.B., *History of Monmouthshire*).

THE BADGE OF WALES

"An ostrich feather piercing a scroll was undoubtedly the favourite badge of the Black Prince, but he had no exclusive property in it, and with variations it was used by most of the Plantagenet Princes. Sir H. Nicholas, in his valuable paper on the badge (printed in *Archaeologia* XXXI, 350), informs us that "among certain pieces of plate belonging to Queen Philippa of Hainault, mother of the Black Prince, was a large silver dish, with a black escutcheon with single ostrich feathers," and he suggests that the ostrich feather was originally a badge of the Counts of Hainault derived from the country of "Ostrevant," a title which was held by their eldest sons (Woodland's *Heraldry*). In May, 1914, curiosity was excited by the discovery of part of the register of the Black Prince, in an old iron box in the possession of a private individual. It was submitted to Sir Henry Maxwell-Lyte, Deputy Keeper of the Record Office, who at once recognised its authenticity, and declared it to be the missing volume of a series of three registers, of 1350 to 1365, the other two being in the possession of the Record Office. Probably the first reference to the Prince of Wales feathers is made in this book. "The Black Prince orders from John de Hiltoft a Privy Seal *fait de nos armes de penne*" (made after our device of feathers). The cost was to be forty shillings. This was in June 1355.

Another item is recorded thus :

"Twenty-four garters made for my Lord Prince, bought and given by him the same day to the Knights of the Society of the Garter." The date of this entry is 1348, and it is thought to be the earliest reference known to the Garter as an established order.

IN THE MARCH WALL

The diary is written in a mixture of languages, French, Latin and English, and has on each leaf "Engleterre," the month and the year. The condition of the manuscript is very fair and legible (*The Times*, May 14, 1914).

On the tomb of the Black Prince in Canterbury Cathedral, is the shield called in his will "my shield for Peace," which bears three ostrich feathers singly, each passing through a little scroll, bearing the motto "Ich Dien."

We learn from the Harl. MS. 304, folio 12, that the feather silver, with the pen gold, is the King's: "The feather and pen silver, the Prince's; and the feather gold, and the pen ermine, is the Duke of Lancaster's" (Henry de Grosmont).

John of Gaunt placed a chain along the quill (in reference to the badge of the town of Ghent).

The three ostrich plumes, interesting to us as grouped together with the princely coronet, do not date back further than the Stuarts. Edward Tudor, Prince of Wales, son of Henry VIII, first ensigned three feathers with a coronet and he charged this group upon a roundel" (*Boutel's Heraldry*).

THE EMBLEM OF WALES

THE LEEK

In the Harleian Manuscript 1977, Vol. 9, are the following lines :—

“ I like the leek above all herbs and flowers ;
When first we won the same, the field was ours ;
The leek is white, and green, whereby is meant
That Britons are both stout and eminent ;
Next to the lion and the unicorn,
The leek's the fairest emblem that is worn.”

In the Royal Apophthegms of King James I we are told :
“ The Welshmen in commemoration of the great fight by the Black Prince of Wales do wear leeks as their chosen ensign.” Perhaps the custom is older. It is said that Cadwallader, in 640, gained a victory over the Saxons by the special interposition of St. David, who ordered the Britons to wear leeks in their caps that they might recognise each other. Hence the leek is worn on St. David's Day (March 1).

“ Why wear you your leek to-day ? Saint Davy's day is past ”
(Shakespeare, *Henry V*).

IN THE MARCH WALL

SECTION 8

AELIANORA LA BELLE

Ye Ladye of Gay Provençe

“ Four daughters and each one of them a queen,
Had Raymond Beranger.”

The Queen of Henry III, though not strictly speaking a “ Lady of Skenfrith,” was the wife of the King in whose gift were both church and castle, and the mother of Edmund Cruxback, one of the Crusader Lords. There is no doubt she knew our village and neighbourhood, as she was often in residence at Grosmont Castle, only four miles away, and it is to her we owe its fine church.



ROSE OF
PROVENCE

Eleanor was the second of the beautiful daughters of Beranger, Count of Provençe, the grandson of Alfonso King of Arragon. He was the most illustrious of the Provençal counts, and even had he not been the sovereign of the land of song, his own verses would have entitled him to a distinguished rank among the troubadour poets. His Consort Beatrice, daughter of the Count of Savoy, was scarcely less celebrated for her learning and literary powers.

Eleanor, who is described as “The fairest flower of the land of roses and sweet song,” inherited her beauty and many natural gifts from her accomplished parents, and the very air she breathed tended to foster and encourage them. Before she had entered her teens she had composed a poem which is still in existence, and is to be found in the Royal library in Turin. Romeo (who is mentioned by Dante as one of the greatest Italian poets of his time) was tutor to Eleanor, and the composition of this romance was the cause of her elevation to the crown-matrimonial of England, for the poem, the subjects of which were

THE BRIDE OF HENRY III

the Princess Briende and her sister Irlonde (Britain and Ireland), flattered Henry so much that he sought her for his wife.

Henry's age more than doubled that of the fair maid of Provençe, of whose charms and accomplishments he had received such favourable reports, and though he was aware that the poverty of the Count, her father, was almost proverbial, he was seriously alarmed lest he should lose the lady, and wrote to his ambassadors "to conclude the marriage forthwith, either with money or without : but at all events to secure the lady for him, and to conduct her to England without delay."

Eleanor was married to the King on the 4th of January 1236. All chronicles and poets, whether in English rhyme or in Latin prose, agree in representing this Princess as richly deserving her surname of "La Belle."

Peter of Langtoft, the Court poet and "rhyming chronicler" of the day, gives the following description of the Royal bride :

"Henry our King at Westminster took to wife.

The Earl's daughter of Provençe,

The fairest maid in life,

Her name is Aelianor, of gentle nature,

Beyond the seas there was no such creature."

"At the solemnity of this feaste all the high Peeres of the realm both spirituall and temporall were present, there to exercise their offices, as to them appertained. The citizens of London were there in great arraie, bearing before hir in solemn wise three hundred and three score cuppes of gold and of silver, in token that they ought to wait upon hir cuppe.

"The Archbishop of Canterbury according to his duties, crowned hir, and the Bishop of London assisted him as his deacon.

"The citizens of London served out wine to everyone in great plentie. The feaste was plentiful so that nothing wanted that could be wished, moreover in the Tothill fields Roiall joustes were holden by the space of eight daies together."

IN THE MARCH WALL

The story of this period has been preserved for us by Matthew Paris. He was an eminent artist as well as historian, and many of his manuscripts which are preserved, are illustrated by his own hand.

He tells us in describing the young Queen's coronation, "Whatever the world could produce for glory or delight was there conspicuous." The Queen's jewellery was magnificent, supposed to have cost her husband £30,000, an enormous sum if reckoned according to the value of our money to-day. The Lords Marchers of Wales claimed the right to carry the canopy over the Queen's head, "and she glittered very gloriously as she sat upon the throne."

The most sumptuous and splendid garments ever seen in England, were worn in this reign, for the peaceful and vigorous administration of Hubert de Burgh had filled England with wealth and luxury, drawn from her commerce with the South of France.

The extravagance in dress at this time, has been noted by many writers. "Henry was considered the greatest fop in his dominions, and did not confine his wardrobe precepts to his own person, but liberally issued benefactions of velvet, satin, cloth of gold and ermine for the apparelling of his most lovely Queen."

Matthew Paris very uncivilly compares the ladies to peacocks, which he says "delight in feathers of various colours, so do our Court ladies ; the peacocks trail their long tails in the dirt, but the ladies make their tails a thousand times longer than the peacocks."

The celebrated historian was held in great respect by their Majesties and invited to dine at the Royal table every day ; he frequently wrote in the presence and from the dictation of the King. Neither Henry nor Eleanor was probably aware how often that observant monk took note of their sayings and doings for the example of distant generations, enriching his chronicle moreover with many a choice anecdote of the personal history of Royalty of the thirteenth century.

HONOURS FOR THE QUEEN'S UNCLES

In 1220 Henry's guardian, Hubert de Burgh, was Lord of Grosmont, Skenfrith and White Castles. Seven years later Grosmont castle was enlarged by him. We find that Henry gave him a hundred oak trees for the work. The King was interested in the castle, which afterwards became a favourite residence with his family for generations (Mrs. Bagnall Oakeley).

It is not difficult to people this old castle, or to picture the costly furniture and decorations with which Eleanor was surrounded, as both she and the King undoubtedly possessed a love of the fine arts ; we find he "caused the Queen's chambers at Westminster to be beautified and adorned with historical paintings" and at his castle of Winchester "that the King's wainscotted chamber be painted with Saxon histories and the Queen's with the history of Alexander the Great."

The Provençal beauty surrounded herself with literary men, minstrels, troubadours, and poets ; and now for the first time, we hear of a Poet Laureate "our beloved versificator" who by the King's orders received "one hundred shillings" in payment of his arrears. This office was in all probability introduced into the Royal household by the Queen, who was herself a poet (Strickland, *Queens of England*).

Henry had certainly married a wife whose tastes and pursuits were his own, which accounted in a great measure for the unbounded influence she acquired over him and retained long after her youth had passed away.

The land was now flooded with foreign favourites, chiefly Savoyards, relatives and followers of the new Queen, whose four uncles were soon established in high positions in England. The Savoy Hotel in the Strand still recalls the name of one of these, Peter of Savoy, whose magnificent palace stood there. Another, Boniface, was made Archbishop of Canterbury, and a third, Bishop of Winchester. With him came to England his Savoyard chaplain, Peter de Aquablanca, for whom the vacant bishopric of Hereford was secured (Canon Bannister, *Herefordshire*).

IN THE MARCH WALL

Though rarely in his diocese by reason of constant attendance on the King, to whom he soon became indispensable, Bishop Peter built (and made the reluctant canons pay for) the north transept of the Cathedral, with its curiously foreign look ; even the masons came from the south of France.

(Might not these men have also been employed by the Queen in building Grosmont Church—14 miles away ?)

Bishop Peter died in 1268. The north-west transept contains the exquisitely beautiful shrine, probably erected by himself, under which repose the remains of his nephew John, Dean of Hereford, as well as his own—his heart excepted, which with a pathetic yearning of home-sickness, he desired should be carried to the church which he had founded in his own sunny land of Savoy.

It was during this Bishop's time that at a Synod, held in 1261, it was ordered that every Bishop should have one, or two, prisons in his diocese, to receive clergy guilty of moral or canonical offences ; one of these was at Hereford, and one at Ross, the latter brought to light in 1837 and consisting of a dungeon underground, excavated from the rock, and entered only by an opening in the roof. The walls above ground were five feet nine inches thick ; and the chamber itself was sixteen feet long, and twelve wide, having a stone bench on two sides, and on the west side a platform in which were six iron rings, one of which, including its leaden fastening, weighed seventy-two pounds (Phillott, *Dioc. History*).

In the early days of the thirteenth century, a great religious revival was taking place throughout Europe, evidenced by the rise of the Franciscan and Dominican orders. In response to the preaching of these friars, a great development was given to the veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary. As a result, in most of the great cathedrals and churches, Lady chapels were built at their eastern ends. Such a chapel was built by Henry at Westminster, the foundation stone being laid six days after his marriage (1236) and the Saturday before the Queen was crowned. Later, the King embarked on the great work of Westminster Abbey ; it had long

THE BUILDING OF GROSMONT CHURCH

been his dearest ambition to achieve the construction of a new and great church to the honour of Edward the Confessor, to whose memory he was deeply attached. Determined that his church should be a building of incomparable beauty, a fit setting for the new and splendid shrine of St. Edward which he had created, he was undoubtedly influenced very largely in his plan by the glorious cathedrals then springing up in France.

It has been suggested that in Rheims he found a specific type which he had followed at Westminster. Both of these buildings it should be noted are "Coronation Churches," which may possibly supply a reason for the similarity of plan (Troutbeck, *Founders of Westminster Abbey*).

The choir with its unusual form and radiating chapels plainly follows French models, but the name of the architect is lost.

During the time that Henry's interests were centred on this great work, the Queen, who was at Grosmont Castle, was also busy with her French architect, in the erection of the church, which shows by its size and beauty, what an important town Grosmont then was.

It was built when the castle was in its prime, and it would not then have been too large for its needs. (See Grosmont Church.)

St. Edward's Chapel being now completed, it formed the crowning glory of Westminster Abbey. On the 13th of October (St. Edward's day) 1269, assisted by his sons Edward and Edmund and his brother the King of the Romans, the King bore the bier of the Royal Saint on his shoulders and, in the presence of his Queen and all the nobles of his court, he placed it in its new station. Queen Eleanor offered a silver image of the Virgin and other jewels of great value at the shrine. Henry had reserved the old coffin of St. Edward for his own private use ; having an idea that its previous occupation by the Royal Saint had made it a peculiarly desirable tenement.

The shrine, which lies immediately behind the Altar screen (which King George V faced during his coronation), was often in earlier days the scene of many strange ceremonies. Henry III

IN THE MARCH WALL

was very careful to celebrate the days of the Confessor's death and translation, and it is recorded that "on the Vigil of this saint, the King spent the entire night in the Abbey dressed in white garments, passing the hours in fasting, watching, prayer, and acts of charity."

Henry's Lady chapel was pulled down by Henry VII to make room for the new mausoleum which he built for the remains of Henry VI and to serve as a burial place for himself and his family (Troutbeck).

Henry III died on the 16th day of November 1272, having reigned fifty-six years, and the Knights Templars, with the consent of the Queen, undertook the care and expense of his funeral, which was very magnificent. His remains, royally robed and crowned, were, according to his own desire, placed in the old coffin in which the body of Edward the Confessor had originally been interred, and were buried near the shrine of that monarch in Westminster Abbey, in a tomb of appropriate magnificence, richly decorated with gold and glass mosaic, jasper and precious stones, brought from the East for that purpose by his Crusader sons. Upon the upper portion of this rests a gilt bronze effigy made by William Torrel, the London goldsmith, which, executed as it was at the moment of the very highest development of Gothic Art, is considered by those competent to judge, to be at least equal to any in Europe (Troutbeck).

After the death of her husband the Royal widow deposed the diadem from her head, and the precious purple from her shoulders, and with them all worldly ambition, and took the veil and religious habit at Amesbury.

During the absence of Edward I in Scotland, death carried off the two English Queens, his wife and his mother. Eleanor died in her Convent, and the nuns not being able to bury her with sufficient magnificence, embalmed her body, and on her son's return her obsequies were reverently celebrated. The heart of his mother the King carried with him to London, together with that of his beloved wife Eleanor of Castile. The latter was enclosed in an urn, and deposited in the church of the Black Friars, and that

ONE TEST OF NOBILITY

of his mother in the church of the Friars Minorites, which had been founded by her son Edmund, on his return from the Crusades. Edmund also gave the advowson of the church of Skenfrith (of which he was then patron) to the Abbot of the Priory of Grâce Dieu (a Cistercian monastery built by John of Monmouth), that the monks should pray for the repose of the souls of his father and his mother.

The grant was signed at Grosmont castle on Wednesday the Eve of All Saints (Patent Rolls 19 Edward I), 1291.

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The post-mortem inquests of Edward I furnish us with two examples of land tenure in England :

John Paternoster held a parcel of land situated at Esthenreth, co. Berks, on condition that he should say one " Our Father " and one " Ave Maria " every day, for the good estate of the King and the repose of the souls of his forefathers, Kings of England.

Richard, brother of the aforesaid John, was declared his heir and received the land, subject to the same conditions.

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A foreign historian declares that the language of this reign was a regular confusion of tongues, as no man rightly understood his neighbour. It was a mark of nobility and gentle breeding, for people to converse in Norman-French, or in Provençal, and many affected the languages who knew them not. All the Queen's Court spoke Provençal. The law acknowledged no language but Norman-French, the Church nothing but Latin, the people a corrupted Saxon ; therefore poor England had to endure the plague of the Tower of Babel (Bradley's *Marches and Borderlands*).

IN THE MARCH WALL

SECTION 9

THE RED ROSE OF LANCASTER

Aethan son of Cadivor ap Gwaethvoed, Prince of Cardigan, is described as Lord of Grismont, Skenfrith, and White Castles, which he is said to have occupied before the Conquest. The demesne lands adjoining and indicating the site of the castle (according to some records) were called "Roslwyn" (rose bush), and it is remarkable that Aethan adopted the Red Rose as his badge. Moreover, in Clytha the whole of his demesne lands, and portions in other parishes, were granted in "fee farm" to his retainers, whose descendants in a survey as late as the reign of Elizabeth, claimed to own their lands "ex dono domini Aethan," paying yearly one Red Rose, on the feast of St. John the Baptist (Clarke's *Monmouthshire*).



RED ROSE OF
LANCASTER

The Red Rose represented the castle and lordship of Grismont, and Queen Eleanor, the "Rose of Provence," was the first to adopt it as the badge of her House, probably not only on account of the past history of the castle, but also because, as Mr. Planché suggests, "It is from the sunny clime of Provence that we derive the rose of our Gardens" (Woodland, *Heraldry*).

"Nature is bounteous in that region fair,
For even winter has her blossoms there
In pomp supreme the countless roses past,
Battalion on battalion thronging fast,
Each with a different banner flowing bright,
Damask, or striped, crimson, pink or white,
Until they bowed before a new born Queen."

The Queen was evidently fond of her flowers, for we find that soon after their marriage the King ordered "windows of white glass to be put in the wooden lattices of our Queen's chamber, looking towards the borders of our herbarium, and to cause an

ROSES RED AND ROSES WHITE

extension of the trellises on the steps, leading from our chamber to our herbarium " (Strickland, *Queens of England*).

Eleanor's eldest son, Edward I, had on his badge a Red Rose, and, from his time downwards, roses were used on their dress and furniture by many of the House of Plantagenet who descended from him. The tomb of Queen Eleanor's second son, Edmund Cruxback, was painted with Red Roses, and to his children, Thomas and Henry, descended the claim of Provence. Henry's eldest son (Henry de Grosmont), the first Duke of Lancaster, who was born at Grosmont Castle, had on his seal a bunch of roses (Woodland, *Heraldry*).

John of Gaunt married the Duke's younger daughter and heiress, and claimed Provence accordingly. On his death he bequeathed to St. Paul's Cathedral his " bed powdered with roses."

The White Rose of York was tintured red by the House of Lancaster with the Beaufort line, with which it seems to have been particularly associated. Shakespeare calls it " the badge of Somerset." Grosmont belonged to the Dukes of Beaufort, and gave them the title of " Viscount de Grosmont " (Harper, *Marches of Wales*).

The Red and White Roses were combined under Henry VII in the " Tudor Rose," the white within the red.



TUDOR
ROSE

When Elizabeth of York went to her coronation, as Queen of Henry VII, she rode in a rich car, covered in cloth of gold, drawn by six white horses, followed by twenty-one of her ladies mounted on white palfreys, the reins and the housings of all being covered with white roses.

According to the quaint phraseology of Fuller :

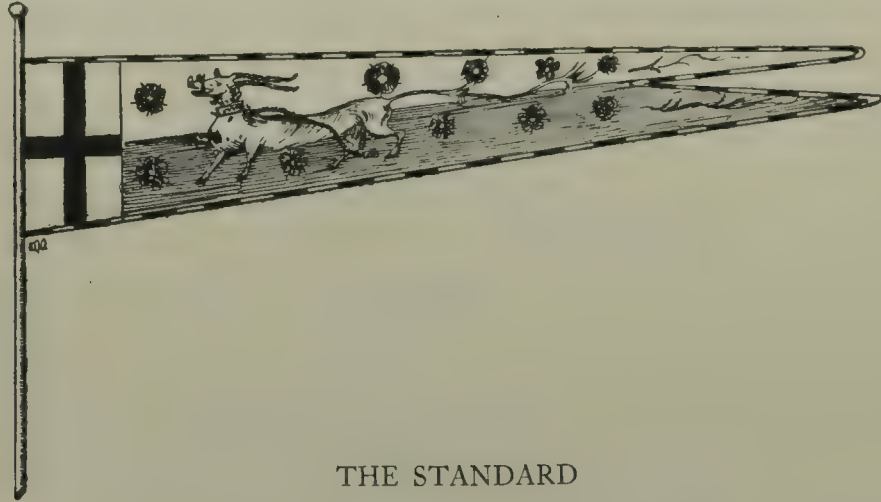
" His hand held that sweet posie, wherein the White and Red roses first were tied together."

When her child was born " the rich bed and pallet in the Queen's chamber had a fine canopy of velvet, striped with gold, and garnished with Red Roses."

IN THE MARCH WALL

There are remains of old stained windows in Skenfrith church, which were collected and made into an east window. Amongst these will be found the Roses of York and Lancaster—also in the carving in the sanctuary.

This is the Standard of Henry V. of Monmouth—" Sprinkled



THE STANDARD

with ten roses of Lancaster ” (from a Tudor Manuscript in the College of Arms).

Copied in its correct colouring and measuring eleven yards, it was flown from the Juliet in Skenfrith Castle on the occasion of the historical pageant held in 1899—which represented the successive Lords of the Castle and their Ladies from 1065.

We like to think the Red Rose of Lancaster originated in our neighbourhood.

A PROVENÇAL POET

KING GEORGE V AND PROVENCE

An incident which occurred during the "Mistral" celebrations is worthy of record. In the presence of the Bishop of Digne, Mass was celebrated and the sermon preached in Provençal by Father Xavier de Fourviere, of the Premonstratensians, now settled in England. (The Premonstratensians (or White Canons) were instituted by St. Norbert, A.D. 1119, at Præmonstratum (Prémontré) in France.) The inauguration of the monument was followed by a banquet, all the speeches being in Provençal. The incident above referred to was Father de Fourviere proposing the health of King George V, on account of His Majesty's Provençal origin through Henry III, who married a daughter of the Comte de Provence, Raymond Beranger II (*The Globe*, September 27, 1910).

M. Frederic Mistral, the poet of Provence, died in March, 1914, at Maillane, near the mouth of the Rhone. Son of a farmer, he re-established the Provençal tongue, with its echoes of the troubadours. Besides his poems, published during more than half a century, he compiled a dictionary of the dialect.

April 23, 1911

The Queen has been graciously pleased to accept from the Royal Society of St. George some RED AND WHITE ROSES for St. George's Day, the 23rd inst.

IN THE MARCH WALL

SECTION 10

GROSMONT CHURCH

Is dedicated to St. Nicholas, and not to a Welsh saint, which points to its having had no earlier foundation than the castle. It is said to have been commenced by Brian de Wallingford, the second lord of Abergavenny (and the first Crusader lord of Grosmont), in the twelfth century and to have been completed by Eleanor of Provence (Colonel Sir Joseph Bradney, C.B., *History of Monmouth*).

The church is early English : built in the form of a cathedral, cruciform in plan, with a peculiarly handsome octagonal tower (in which are six bells) and a spire at the intersection of the transepts. It comprises a chancel of unusual length, which as an example of early English is said to have scarcely a parallel in any rural parish. On the south side is a series of seven very beautiful Early English windows. It had sedilia, and there is a very fine double piscina of the same date. The projections for the support of the Lenten veil should be specially noticed. (See *Lenten Veil*, *Skenfrith*, p. 28.) The other (single) piscina of the same character, now in the north aisle, was formerly in Queen Eleanor's chapel which is now used as the vestry. The Font is late Norman octagonal with a cable ornament. The opening arches to the transepts on each side have been blocked up ; corbels are to be seen, upon which it was evidently intended that the rood-loft should rest.

Sir Henry Howorth thought there was no trace of Norman, but that the Church belonged to the second transition period. Mr. Bond, writing on screens, was the first person really to illustrate their progressive history (*Arch. Cam.* 1909). The natural place for a screen would be enclosing the chancel, but in monastic churches, priories, etc., the choir was taken across the square between the two transepts, and included the two eastern bays of the nave. Mr. Bond suggested that the church might be monastic. The corbels in the second archway, which supported the great



GROSMONT CHURCH

IN THE MARCH WALL

beam, pointed to the church having been monastic, in which there would be a necessity for a large choir space for the monks or canons. It was a noble church, large and stately.

In the unfinished nave is a rudely made chest with four locks, and in a recess some very primitive candle stands, and also the cylinder of the old barrel organ which was used in the church. How interesting, if one could hear its voice again ! Probably it would have the " Old Hundredth " among its hymns.

By the west door is an opening nine inches square, which some are inclined to think may be a leper window.

It is supposed that the work of the church, which was left unfinished, was stopped in consequence of the plague of 1349. There is a handsome cross in the churchyard on the north side with octagonal base and 4 ft. 6 in. of the original shaft remaining. It has been said that this marks the burial place of the victims of the pestilence, and by others it is thought that it covers John of Kent's grave (see *John of Kent*, p. 171).

There are many exterior traces of buildings and raised causeways, constructed like Roman roads, with large blocks of stone, which prove the extent and importance of the church to have been considerable.

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The church was appropriated to the Priory of Abergavenny before 1254, when its vicarage was valued apart from the church. It was distinctly stated to belong to Abergavenny in 1291, when the church was worth £10 and its vicarage £5. In 1535 the living was styled, probably in error, a " Rectory," worth £7 6s. 6d., for at the same time the Prior drew £6 13s. 4d. from the parish of Grosmont.

It was a vicarage in 1563, and again in 1603, when it was worth £18 per annum, and the impropriation worth £30 belonged to the King, and was held by Francis Burgh, Roger Vaughan, and Philip Morgan gent. The style " Rectory " was again applied to it in

DETAILS OF GROSMONT CHURCH

1835, although the great tithes belonged to the lay Impropiators. The living was worth gross £152, and the Crown was the patron (Archdeacon Green, *Churches of Llandaff Diocese*).

Before the restoration of the church there were galleries over the north and south transepts, one for the minstrels, and on the other side were the singers. The instruments consisted of fiddle, clarionet, and 'cello, the musicians being self-taught. The village blacksmith was the clerk, and his daughter led the singing. Occasionally the fiddle failed to put in an appearance, and the clerk, who took a great interest in the choir and sang bass, would look up to the gallery and call to his daughter, "Now, Pollie, pitch the kay."

About seventy years ago, the present organ was in a loft over the lath and plaster screen, which then divided the transepts from the nave—it combined the manual, as now used, with the barrel, already referred to. This attachment played eight or ten tunes. At that time there was no one who could play the manual, so the local genius, who was a clock and watch cleaner, taught himself to pick out the tunes by ear—as played by the barrel—but occasionally got into difficulties, and the choir had to wait till the barrel was readjusted (Mr. Hudson Evans).

In 1879 the church was restored, and a new east window erected representing the feeding of the five thousand :

"To the glory of God and in grateful memory of the late J. E. W. Rolls Esq. and Mrs. Rolls of the Hendry, Monmouth, who though having no connection with the parish, were chiefly instrumental in furthering the restoration of this church, this window was erected by the parishioners and friends. A.D. 1879."

In the chancel the Rector put up a brass tablet :

"In thankful remembrance of the large benefactions of John Etherington Welch Rolls, Elizabeth Mary Rolls and John Allan Rolls, whereby with other gifts, this church has been restored from

IN THE MARCH WALL

a state of decay, and made beautiful, to the Honour and Glory of God.

“ This tablet was placed by Charles Wesley—Rector—1888.”

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The Revd. Charles Alexander Wesley M.A.

Died 18 March 1914.

Aged 71 years.

Having been Rector for 30 years.

* * * * *

Mr. Wesley bought the living in 1884 and left the advowson by will to the Bishop of Gloucester, who appointed the Revd. Gomer Davies, B.A., May 1914, who was succeeded by the Revd. Hopkins Evans, M.A.

AN INTERESTING FIND

THE GROSMONT WELSH PRAYER BOOK

(Found in 1914)

William Morgan, appointed Bishop of Llandaff by Elizabeth in 1595, was the greatest benefactor of Wales in sowing the seed of the Gospel among its barren hills. He translated the Bible into Welsh and infused new life into the Welsh language and its literature. The Bishops of Hereford were until recently always included with the Bishops of Wales in all Welsh ecclesiastical matters, and Welsh was commonly spoken in those parts of the diocese adjacent to Wales. There are now old Welsh Bibles in some of the Hereford churches, which bear unmistakable signs of having been used. One of the few copies of Bishop Morgan's Welsh Bible is to be found in the library of Rector Davis' Clergy Home, Llwyngwil, Merionethshire (Hughes, *Church of the Cymri*). In the unfinished nave of Grosmont Church is the Parish Hutch, provided under the ecclesiastical law, as already pointed out in the description of Skenfrith Church (p. 34).

The Grosmont Hutch has four locks; probably the clerk kept the fourth key. (This might determine the date?) Few chests of any interest date from the Jacobean period; plain deal boxes were then held good enough. In this Hutch were found the remains of an old Welsh Prayer Book in black letter bearing the date XIV Carl II 1664. Of this Mr. J. Babbinger, of the National Library of Wales, writes: "It is not a particularly rare book, but it is of great interest to find it at Grosmont, and especially with the substitution of the names of Sovereigns in the Prayers to which you allude, as it shows that Welsh services, or at any rate mixed Welsh and English services, existed down to the beginning of the eighteenth century. I have said above that the 1664 Prayer Book is not rare. We have five or six copies here (the National Library of Wales), nor is it one of the earliest issues; it is in fact the sixth issue, the first being 1567, in which year the New Testament in Welsh also appeared." This Prayer Book was

IN THE MARCH WALL

used without alteration till the accession of Queen Anne, in 1702, when her name was written over that of the King (Charles II).

In the prayer for the Royal Family are mentioned "Grasusas Caththerin" Queen Mother (Catherine of Braganza, wife of Charles II), and Mari (eldest daughter of James, Duke of York, James II). Her name is crossed out and above it is written "Princess Popera" (Popish) and "Iago Duc" (James, Duke of York).

On the first page is written "George Meredith," who may have been Vicar at the time, but the name is not given in the list of Vicars in the *Hist. of Mon.* by Colonel Sir Joseph Bradney, C.B.

The alteration of name in "y Letani" (the Litany) from Charles to Ann is initialled "J. W. G." John Willim (or Gwillim) was Vicar of Grosmont in 1699 and William III was Patron.

* * *

Charles II was suspected of a leaning towards Rome, and his brother and heir (James, Duke of York) was known to be a bigoted Catholic. James' first wife, Catherine, had died a Catholic, and he had then, in defiance of the House of Commons, married Princess Mary of Modena, another Catholic. The Duke's two daughters, Mary and Anne, were successively Queens of England and were "bred Protestants by the imperative command of the King" (Charles), who had no children, and the Duke, before his accession, "passed for a Protestant."

FURTHER CHURCH DETAILS

CHURCH PLATE

Chalice

Chalice eight inches high ; the bowl is V-shaped supported by a baluster stem and hall-marked 1609. It is of heavy metal, and in excellent preservation.

Mr. Halliday, the author of *Llandaff Church Plate*, writes to the late Vicar of Grosmont : " The cup is an excellent example of the type of Chalice in vogue from 1600 to 1630. I cannot get at the maker's mark, which seems almost illegible."

In his book the writer says " the maker's mark resembles R. S. with a flower between."

This is the only old plate at Grosmont ; everything else is plated (1844).

THE BELLS

The inscriptions on the bells are as follows :

Cover bell. God save the church and Kingdom. A. R. 1707.

1. God prosper this church and place. A. R. 1707.

2. Prosperity to our benefactors. A. R. 1707.

3. William Phillips Churchwarden. A. R. 1707. Abra.
Rudhall of Gloucester, Bellfounder.

4. John Rudhall Gloucester 1808.

5. John Rudhall Gloucester 1807.

(Colonel Sir Joseph Bradney, C.B., *Hist. of Monmouthshire*.)

IN THE MARCH WALL

THE REGISTERS

Book No. 1

Grosmont's earliest registers date from 1589. The entries are in Gothic characters and the pages are much discoloured, and difficult to decipher.

In 1598 there is a decorative inscription in Latin setting forth that "John Marten, Clerk, was Rector de Grossmonte in the reign of Queen Elizabeth 1598."

Most of the burials are given as "In the Church," but no interesting particulars.

At the burial of Elizabeth, wife of John Gabb, in 1663, nine Springetts signed the register; Mary and Elisebeth adding "Her hand and pen, Amen."

1672 is the latest date in this book. There would therefore be only eight years to account for between this and the next.

No. 2

"Register booke of ye parish of Grossmonnt concerning christenings, weddings, and burialls—bought in the yeare of our Sovereign Lord King Charles the Second (the thirtieth) and in the yeare of our Lord god 1678."

Baptisms

In entering the baptisms of children the occupation of the father is always given—as: "laboreer," "weaver," "yeoman," "tannor," "ale-seller," "gunsmith," "mercier," "sawyer," "flax-dresser," "a tenant," "a coal-carrier," "a tailer," "corvizer" (shoe-maker), "cord-wainder" (shoe-maker), "rag-gatherer." This seems to show that there was a distinction between "corvizer" and "cord-wainder," or "cord-wainer," which cannot now be traced.

Only one name was given to the child. Some of them were rather curious, as: "Margarott," "Handy (daughter Moor Jenkins)." "Maudlin" was a favourite name for a girl. "Honory"

UNUSUAL PROOF OF MARRIAGE

often occurs, "Betrex," "Easter," "Sammelley (son of George Williams)," "Cymbyn Jones baptised 1695."

From 1703 "Ann" was a favourite name, and on two occasions twins have been named "William and Mary."

"Dumcombe Pycke Davies, the son of the Rev. John Davies, Rector of Grossmount by Elizabeth his wife, was baptised 21st of April one thousand seven hundred and fifty-three."

"1775 William son of Thomas Symonds, Gent., Lord Mayor of Grosmont. Nov^r 19th."

Marriages

There is nothing very interesting in the weddings. Frequently the maiden name of the wife is not given, as : "Walter Vaughan and Ann his wife were married at Grismont 10th of June 1689."

It would seem that some weddings were entered in the register on the faith of a statement by the parties themselves : "——— and ———, both of this Parish, were married (so they say) the 20th day of Novembre 1700."

Deaths

The first burial is that of :

"Elinor y^e widdow of Joseph Parry gen^t who was buriod *in flanen* y^e 7th daye of October." This *in flanen* will be explained by the following entry :

"Margarott Arthur, buriod 15th of April 1688. Affidavitt made before James Philips, clerk (Vicar of Skenfryth) of her being wrapped up and buriod only in sheep's wool."

In the earlier register there is no entry of an affidavit for burial "In woollen," but in this book they are continued in each case of death, giving the name of the person before whom the affidavit was sworn, till the year 1751, after which there is no further mention of them. One of the last was James Springett, Mayor of Grosmont, who was buried on the 10th of August 1751, in Queen

IN THE MARCH WALL

Eleanor's Chapel (now the Vestry). The "Affidavit is made of his being buried in woollen."

By an Act (30 Charles II c. 3) passed in 1677 and repealed in 1814, to lessen the importance of linen and to encourage the woollen and paper manufactures, it was provided that the dead should be buried in sheep's wool only, upon pain of forfeiture of £5, half of which was to be applied for the benefit of the poor of the parish and the other half to be paid to the informer. An affidavit was to be made within eight days after interment that the person had been buried in woollen only. The Act was to be read publicly every year for seven years on the Sunday after St. Bartholomew's, after divine service.

From the account of the Churchwardens of Grosmont 1794 :

"Eight yards of burial crape for making a shroud." It does not appear, therefore, that the Act of Charles II was strictly observed.

Here is a curious certificate made in accordance with the Act in 1724 :

"I, Lydia Hall of the parish of Sandhurst in the county of Berkshire make the oath that Elizabeth Justice lately deceased was not put in, wrapt or wound up or buried in any shirt, shift, sheet or shroud, made or mingled with flax, hemp, silk, hair, gold or silver, or other material contrary to act of Parliament by burying in woollen, but sheep's wooll only.

"Witness by hand day and year above written. Roger Clark—Rector."

The higher classes disliked the Act, and tried as much as possible to evade the law. Pope wrote these lines of Mrs. Oldfield, the actress, who was buried in Westminster Abbey in "A Brussels lace headdress, a holland shift with tucker and double ruffles of the same lace, and a pair of new kid gloves" :

BURIALS IN WOOLLEN

“ Odious ! in woollen, it would a saint provoke,”
Were the last words that poor Narcissa spoke.
“ No, let a charming chintz and Brussels lace
Wrap my cold limbs, and shade my lifeless face.”

Some years ago during excavations in an old churchyard in Yorkshire, some coffins were opened, and the bodies, which had been wrapped in sheep's wool, were found to be encased as in a shell of porcelain, resembling a chrysalis ; the oil being absorbed, the wool became brittle.

* * *

Benedict Bisley's life's history is contained in the three following entries :

In September 1677 a Parish meeting was held at Grosmont for the “ raysing of money for the highways in the said Parish ” and the sum required was lent by Benedict Bisley, Gent. at “ one peny p pound.” His name is entered in the accounts as having paid £15, £9 and £1 3s. od.

The next year “ on ye 8th daye of October 1678 was buried Jane y^e wife of Benedictus Bisley, Gent, and the ‘ Affidavitt ’ (of the burial in woollen) was registered on the 14th.” Above his name (probably written at a later date) are the words, “ a popish recusant,” which no doubt will explain this last entry : “ On y^e 14th daye of April 1702 was buried a poore man, Benedictus Bisley.”

In 1729 the word “ paupor ” is first used. Until that time it was “ a poor man,” or “ a poor woman,” “ was buriod.”

“ Richard Heath—Clerk—Master of Arts, Rector of Grosse-mount, buriod 18th daye of Novembre 1679—Affidavitt of burial on Woollon made same daye, anno predicto.”

“ *Mrs.* Mary Davis, a spinster, buried y^e 23rd daye of February 1718.”

IN THE MARCH WALL

"Humpty, a poore woman, was buried in y^e Church; 10th daye February 1718.

"Charles Morgan, a servant, died of a quincy in 20 minutes January 17th 1783."

* * *

Anno Domini 1683 :

John Saunders nominated Ann Price widd. (widow) Churchwarden. Waltar Roberts nominated James Saunders Churchwarden.

In the present day women churchwardens are occasionally elected, but it is considered quite an innovation. History repeats itself.

METHODS OF RAISING MONEY

VESTRY MEETING

“ At a meeting in the Vestry in the Parish Church of Grismond, upon the first of May Anno Dom. 1692. It was then unanimously resolved and ordered by the freeholdery and the rest of the inhabitants of the Parish of Grismond as followeth :

“ That the Churchwardens shall suffer no person to be buried, or grave opened, in the Church aforesaid, or porch, before three shillings and foure pence be 1st pd unto them—And that noe stranger shall be buried, as afore said, before foure shillings and foure pence be 1st pd unto them, and that the Sexton presume not to open any grave within y^e Church, or porch, with out the order of the Churchwardens.

“ That all the monyes resived for such burialls shall be applyd towards ye reparation of y^e church, or church yard wall.

“ Allsoe that the Church yard wall shall for ever hereafter be repayrd by the churchwardens, by a pound rate or tax, and that the churchwardens shall with all speed repayre it.

“ That all Bookes and other writings that concern the parish, shall be kept in the great coffor, and that there be three locks put upon y^e great chest, or coffor, and that one key be delivered to the Minister, one to y^e churchwardens, and the other to the overseers of y^e poore of y^e s^d parish.

“ Four Confirmation thereof we have hereunto put our hands this 1st day of May, Anno Dom. 1692.

Henry Vaughan—Rector—

Amb. Scudamore. J. Scudamore.

James Springett. Llen. Gabb.

Cha. Walwyn. John Pritchard.

James Phillipps (Vicar of Skenfryth).

The mark of : Thos. Sanders. William Jones. Walter Roberts,
etc.”

IN THE MARCH WALL

“The tyethe of the Cold Grainge in the parish of Grossmound, and y^e tyethe of Lanvayres chapell in y^e parish of Grossmound, to be comprised and rated in y^e parsons tyethe, in all, £15 0 0.”

Here follow the same signatures with the addition of that of “Herbert Croft.”

After the capture of Hereford by the Scots on Dec. 18th 1645, the Cathedral was overrun by the soldiers, windows destroyed, brass monuments torn up, the library plundered and ornaments carried off. The “dauntless Dean,” Herbert Croft, preached in the Cathedral against the sin of sacrilege. The soldiers wished to shoot him down, but were restrained by the Governor.

He was Bishop of Hereford from 1661 to 1691.

DISPOSAL OF FUNDS

SOME ITEMS FROM THE CHURCHWARDEN'S ACCOUNTS FROM 1790

As Parish meetings were held at the public houses in rotation, it is not surprising that "Ale at the meeting" should form a considerable item.

Kites, hawks, crows, hedge-hogs, fitchocks (fitchew or polecat), wild cats, were paid for, and a shilling each was given for foxes.

The war with France, which began in 1793, and terminated with the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, will explain the many items for wounded soldiers and sailors, and the sums for substitutes in the Militia ; also the "Charity to the French Clergy."

Bread and wine for the Sacrament at Christmas, Easter, Whitsuntide and Michaelmas cost from 4s. to 5s. each time.

	£	s.	d.
Ale for Fift of November	5	0	
Paid for a Shroud for Anne Williams	4	8	
To Joseph Williams for being out of y ^e parish for one day to serch for James Smith with a warrant	2	0	
To shoes for Henry Powel by order of Parish Meeting	6	8	
To ale at that Meeting	5	10	
50 ft. of oak plank at 8d. a foot (<i>sic</i>)	16	8	
Paid Mary Williams for minding her Father ..	14	0	
Paid Parson for burying Pat McCan	1	0	
Paid Mary for laying out Pat	2	0	
And candles for Maria		4	
Paid Parson for burying Maria	1	0	
Paid W. Morgan's son in his lameness	1	0	
Tubby Lewis for a hawk		4	
Paid John Parry to bury his Father.. ..	15	0	
By Charity for the French Clergy	10	6	
A man and wife and two children by a pass ..	1	6	
Paid for the Bridewell (lock up) Keeper for H. Williams	15	0	
To Thos. Herbert's britshes	3	6	
Paid for a Fox	1	0	

IN THE MARCH WALL

		£	s.	d.
Apl. 1794.	Paid for bell ropes	2	3	6
	My journey to Monmouth on account of providing a man for the Navy		10	6
	Three journeys to Monmouth on account of navy men	1	11	6
	Old Thomas Jones for being ill		1	0
	To Betty Charles to buy a bedgown		3	1½
	Paid two wounded seamen by pass.. .. .		1	6
	Paid 8 sailors by pass.. .. .		3	0
	A seaman without an arm and family			6
	Martha Williams for hurds (the refuse of flax or hemp) for her children to spin		2	0
	Martha Williams in her illness		1	0
	Medicins for do.		1	0
	Laying her out and taking care of her		4	6
	Candles and sugar (sugar was melted and poured on the eyelids to keep them closed)		1	0
	Ale at her buriall		5	6
	Bread and cheese at do.		1	0
	A coffin for Martha Williams		10	0
	8 yards of buriall crape for do.		8	0
	Making a shroud for do.		2	0
	The clerk's fee for do.		3	6
	(2s. for Martha in her illness, and 35s. 6d. for her funeral !)			
	Richard James 9 days repairing the Church		13	6
	do. do. Windows	1	13	10
1799.	To a Militiaman by Vestry.. .. .	10	10	0
	Mary Morgan 3 lbs. of hurds (see above)		2	9
	To whitening, winding and spinning		5	1
	To weaving 35 yards of hurden cloth at 3d. a yard		8	9
	To 18 wounded sailors by pass		7	0
	To Thomas Price for being ill		1	0
1800.	To money towards a substitute in the militia for T. Jones	5	0	0
	To ale at the Parish Meeting		9	0
	do. do.		6	8
1801.	Wheat from King's field due in pheasant time		15	0
	Ale at the Parish Meeting		8	9

DOUBTFUL TOWN TITLES

THE MAYORS OF GROSMONT

There has been doubt expressed as to whether the town of Grosmont ever existed as a real corporate borough, and many think that a "mock mayor" was at some remote period elected by the inhabitants to perform certain duties, till the year 1860, when the custom was discontinued, Mr. Gwyn being the last Mayor.

The earliest record we have in the old Mayor's book is when John Watkins was elected in 1703, and James Springett as his "Ale-taster," the general rule being that the Ale-taster appointed by the Mayor and burgesses was the Mayor elect for the next year, which custom must have existed two or three centuries before 1703. The record speaks of the "custom" of electing Mayors having existed "time out of mind." It does not appear that there were any officers appointed other than the Mayor and the Ale-taster.

Mr. Hudson Evans has had charge of the Mayor's books, the staff of office, and two ale standards (measures for ale-tasting) from the time of the last Mayor.

The measures are very interesting. They are of very heavy metal, probably copper, and nearly half an inch thick, marked with a crown and W. R. (first letter uncertain).

James Springett, Mayor in 1704, is buried in Queen Eleanor's Chapel in Grosmont Church.

There is a gravestone dated 1636 to one of the Gabbs on which the deceased is described as "deputy steward to the King's Majesty, and Mayor of Grosmont" (Clarke, *Monmouthshire*).

IN THE MARCH WALL

SPORTS

On the day of St. Nicholas, the patron saint, large crowds assembled in the village, coming in from all parts of the country, and, after service in the church, proceeded to the castle green, where sports and wrestling matches took place. Old Mrs. Whitehorn, of Orcop, brought cakes and gingerbread. A ring was formed and the cakes were carried on sharpened sticks ; two men fought for them, and the victor took all comers till he was vanquished. The ring was kept by men with cudgels, and the toes of those overstepping the boundary line suffered. This caused a quarrel and fighting, and half a dozen fights would take place at the same time.

There were three annual fairs, and when neighbours disagreed, they deferred the settlement of their difficulties till a fair day, when they "fought it out."

In a curious book, *Account of Aberystwyth*, by Edmund Jones, 1779, the author says :

"What progress the Reformation had made was miserably destroyed by the Book of Sports. No doubt the profane part of the people received the news of these kingly and episcopal orders with pleasure and obeyed these wicked orders to the uttermost, using all manner of sports in the churchyards, bringing music there to animate them in their evil exercises, and in some places the parson himself was the musician. All Hell rejoiced at it, for there was a dreadful harvest of souls prepared for it. Now did the fairies frisk and dance and sing their hellish music, for the darkness of ignorance and vice had returned once more and the feasts of sin were made for them."

Roland Phillips says : "In Wales there was no necessity for such orders (the Book of Sports), for the people enjoyed to the fullness of their hearts all games and sports, and Sunday was the day of all others for games ; and the Parish churchyard shared

VARIED VIEWS OF THE SABBATH

with the old tennis court or castle green, the scene for athletic sports on Sunday afternoon."

The Revd. Rees Pritchards (1620) in *Canwyll-y-Cymry* says :

" A day for drunkenness and gaming,
A day for dancing and for loafing,
Such is the Welshman's Sabbath Day."

IN THE MARCH WALL

HERE ARE SOME INTERESTING PARTICULARS OF THE FAMILY OF A
LATE VICAR

The first name in the Wesley pedigree is that of Guy de Welswe (of Wells, Somerset), who was made a Thane by Athelstan in 938. A patriot of this family (Walter de Wesleigh) was Standard Bearer before Henry II during the wars in Ireland in 1172. Nearly two centuries later, the heroism of another son of the family led him to Palestine with the Crusaders, with the intention of placing the heart of Robert Bruce in the Holy Sepulchre. He fell there in 1340.

From this same branch of the Wesleys descended the ancestors of Lord Mornington, the Marquis Wellesley and the Duke of Wellington, and among the Barons of England were not a few who bore the name of Wesley.

The cloisters of many a monastery have been trodden by members of this family, when piety and learning were thus manifested, and in later years (for nearly three hundred years) the Wesleys have been famous in successive generations as Divines, Poets and Musicians.

John Wesley, 1703-1791, a celebrated English Divine (Charterhouse and Christ Church, Oxford); in 1726 chosen Fellow of Lincoln College, where he became an eminent tutor. In 1737 he united with George Whitfield in founding Methodism. Two collected editions of his works have been published: the first of 32 vols. and the second of 16 vols. He published many hymns which are still in use.

Charles Wesley, 1757-1834. A celebrated English musical performer, excelled as a player on the harpsichord and organ, and while still young was frequently engaged to perform Handel's music before George III. The Prince Regent (afterwards George IV) continued to distinguish the favourite musician, appointing him to be his own organist and musical preceptor to his daughter, the Princess Charlotte, who excelled in music.

A DISTINGUISHED FAMILY

Charles Wesley, D.D., 1793, died at St. James' Palace 1859. In 1833 he was appointed chaplain to the King's (William IV) household at St. James', with a residence in the Palace. Subsequent appointments placed him successively in the office of the Sub-Dean of Her Majesty's Chapels Royal, and in 1847 Chaplain in Ordinary to the Queen. For thirty years Dr. Wesley was officially connected with the ecclesiastical duties of St. James' Palace, and was at the confirmation, coronation and marriage of Queen Victoria, and the baptism and marriage of the Princess Royal (Empress Frederick).

Samuel Sebastian Wesley, Mus. Doc., father of the late Vicar ; organist at Hereford, Gloucester, Winchester and Exeter Cathedrals. "The most justly celebrated organist and the ablest composer of Church music living."

"The universal consent of all musicians in England is that Dr. Wesley is the first among us—he is not only the first organ player that we have, but a most accomplished musician" (Dr. A. Walmsley, Musical Professor, Cambridge, 1841). He married the sister of Dean Merewether, of Hereford, at Ewyas Harold in 1835 (*Memorials of the Wesleys*).

In the north transept of Hereford Cathedral a wheel window has been placed to his memory, and a brass tablet bears the following inscription.

THE CLERESTORY WINDOW OPPOSITE THIS TABLET IS
PLACED

TO THE MEMORY OF
SAMUEL SEBASTIAN WESLEY
MUS. DOC. OXON

ORGANIST OF THIS CATHEDRAL
FROM 1832 TO 1835.
BORN 1810. DIED 1876.

IN THE MARCH WALL

It is an interesting coincidence that the North Transept was built by Peter de Aquablanca, Bishop of Hereford (1240-1268), an uncle of Eleanor of Provence, who is said to have built Grosmont church. In this transept is the tomb of the Bishop, and only a few yards away (but 650 years apart) the memorial of Samuel Sebastian Wesley, the organist of his cathedral and father of the Vicar of Grosmont.

SECTION II

JOHN OF KENT

By "Escudamour" and Revd. J. Pritchard.
(From the Welsh.)

"Sion (Welsh for John) of Kent" was a learned priest and a celebrated bard, and was patronised by the Scudamores of Kentchurch, to whom he became Chaplain. Between 1381 and 1390



IN THE WOOD

he is given as Rector of Kentchurch. He was educated by his uncle, a monk, at Llwyn Lafydd Dw, at Pentyrch, and went to Oxford. It is evident from his writings that he was much in-

IN THE MARCH WALL

fluenced by the Lollards, and we find him unsparingly exposing the vices of the priests of his time. It is not unlikely that as a young man he was acquainted with Sir John Oldcastle, who, having escaped from the Tower, wandered about the mountainous districts of Monmouth, explaining the Word of God and preaching. In one of his odes, John of Kent mentions the death of Martyr Oldcastle. The following are some of his works: "The Creation," "Three Periods of Life," "The Trinity," "The Uncertainty of the World," "A Lamentation for the Condition of the Welsh under Henry IV," "Criticism on the Irregular Lives of the Clergy and other Powerful men," "Ode to God." This last begins with a beautiful paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer, followed by a petition to be delivered from eternal damnation, with a description of Satan and the torments of Hell. The poem concludes with a vivid picture of Heaven, where all, in eternal youth, live for ever in the presence of Christ.

There was preserved till lately at Kentchurch a Latin translation of the Bible on vellum, made or copied by this priest.

This John of Kent has been confused with Owain Glyndwr, who was known during his disguise at Kentchurch by the name of "Sion (or John) of Gwent," and though undoubtedly an accomplished man, Owain is wrongly credited with many important works really written by John of Kent, the Chaplain.

A portrait of the latter on wood (500 years old) is still at Kentchurch (J. H. Matthews, *Hist. and Antiq. of Herefordshire*).

In the churchyard at Grosmont are the remains of a cross, popularly supposed to mark the grave of John of Kent (Harper, *Marches of Wales*).

SECTION 12

OWAIN GLYNDWR

Saw ye that blazing star ?
The heavens look down on Freedom's war
And light her torch on high,
Bright upon the Dragon's crest
It tells that glory's wing shall rest,
When warriors meet to die.

Let earth's pale tyrants read despair
And vengeance in its flame,
Hail ! Hail ! Ye Bards, the omen fair
Of conquest and of fame,
And swell the rushing mountain air
With songs of Glyndwr's name.

Superstition ascribes to the birth of Owain Glyndwr those phenomena supposed to mark the birth of eminent men. Hollinshed seriously writes that : " Strange wonders happened at the nativity of this man, for the same night that he was born, all his father's horses in the stable were found to stand in blood up to their bellies," an omen of the sanguinary career of the infant hero (Hughes, *Church of the Cymry*).

In the reign of Henry IV Glyndwr claimed the Principality, as heir to the Prince Llewelyn, his mother being the great granddaughter of Llewelyn. He was probably born in 1359. He became a student of English law at Westminster and was perhaps called to the Bar (*Dict. National Biography*).

In a manuscript in the library of Jesus College, Cambridge, it is said that Owen was " servant to Richard II, his scutiger and esquire of the bodie he was, and was in his attendance when he was taken on his return from Ireland, at the castle of Flint, by the forces of Henry de Bullingbrok, Duke of Lancaster, and Richard was

IN THE MARCH WALL

deposed and Henry set on the throne ; but he harboured no kindness to Owen, nor was Owen satisfied with them that had wronged his master, who was undoubted heir to the crown, and had been in possession of it for twenty-two years ” (Rowland’s *Mona Antiqua*). But the better opinion is that Glyndwr was in the service of Henry of Lancaster before he became King and not of Richard II (*Dict. Nat. Biog.*).

Among the most beautiful of the Welsh melodies still exists the well known air “ Sweet Richard ” which, according to Miss Strickland, was composed by “ his beloved squire and minstrel ” Owen Glyndwr, as a tribute of regret for his unfortunate master.

Years before the troubles began, Glyndwr, the richest and most popular gentleman in North Wales, had married three of his five daughters into Hereford families : Alice, to Sir John Scudamore of Kentchurch and Holme Lacy, Janet to John Croft of Croft Castle, and Margaret to Roger Monnington of Monnington and Sarnesfield. Owen was living in peace on his estates of Sycherth and Glyndyfrdwy with his four promising sons, when Reginald de Grey of Ruthin attempted unjustly to confiscate his lands. The Lord of Ruthin was perhaps the fiercest, most unscrupulous and pitiless Marcher since William de Braose ; he was also a valiant partisan of the house of Lancaster, while the Welsh had always favoured the hapless Richard. When Lancaster was crowned as Henry IV, Lord Grey, presuming on his favour at the new Court, contrived to have Glyndwr proclaimed as a rebel, attacked him in his home at Sycherth, and drove him to the woods and hills. Owen was no wild mountain chief but a travelled and courtly gentleman, well versed in the art of war, and in all the knowledge of his day, and a born leader of men ; he was now forty-one (or, according to some authorities fifty-one) years old. The blood of the old Kings of Powysland and of the last Welsh Prince of Wales flowed in his veins, and when he raised the old Dragon Standard at Corwen, all North Wales, valley after valley, sent its men in crowds to fight for the heir of Llewelyn. Welsh students at Oxford sold their

UNSUCCESSFUL INVASIONS

books and disappeared, and the Welsh labourers of Herefordshire and Shropshire left their work and their homes and streamed back to the hills.

Owen's first act, as might have been expected, was the sack of Ruthin, which he carried out on a Fair day when the little town was full of stock and valuables ; then crossing the English border he harried all western Shropshire. The King, in alarm, came himself to the town in September 1400, and invaded Wales, but Owen and his men were safe in Snowdonia, and the invasion was nothing more than a promenade to Anglesea and back.

Through the whole summer Glyndwr ravaged Mid-Wales and the border as he liked, sorely pressing the strongest of the castles, and even taking some of them, including New Radnor, where sixty of the defenders were hung from the ramparts, to encourage the rest ! By October the King was at Worcester with Prince Hal, who was fighting almost daily with the Welsh, having his headquarters sometimes at Shrewsbury or Chester, sometimes at Leominster, Hereford or Grosmont.

The King, thirsting to take vengeance for all this, arranged for a great army, said to consist of 100,000 men, to be got together on the march. All through the summer, provisions, arms, and men were pouring into Chester, Shrewsbury, Ludlow and Hereford. By September all was ready for the advance. Henry marched himself with the main body, two flanking columns supporting him, one from Chester, and the other under Prince Hal from Hereford ; but this third invasion was a failure like the other two. Owen, of course, took to the hills, and would not fight, though it seemed as if the stars in their courses were fighting for him, never had such a September been known in the Welsh hills ; the rivers Dee and Wye and Severn and all their mountain tributaries, rose and flooded all the valleys.

The thunder roared as men had never heard it roar and the lightning flashed from peak to peak. Continuous tempest, rain, and hail, and early snow, drenched to the skin the half-starved

IN THE MARCH WALL

soldiery. And in a fortnight the great army was thoroughly beaten without striking a blow. Glyndwr had long been reckoned by the Welsh to be a magician versed in all the lore of Mervyn, and with good-humoured contempt, he had availed himself of the practical advantages to be gained from this reputation of being outside "the roll of common men." But now, when the very heavens came down in sheets of water upon the shivering superstitious English host, friend and foe alike were convinced that Owen was indeed a wizard, against whom even twice their 100,000 men would be powerless. Thus it was that he justified the proud boast that Shakespeare puts into his mouth—

"Three times hath Henry Bolingbrooke made head
Against my power. Thrice, from the banks of the Wye
And sandy bottomed Severn, have I sent
Him bootless home, and weather beaten back."

(Canon Bannister, *Herefordshire*.)

In 1402 "a blazing star" appeared, which flattering bards made portend all good to Owain. The people submitted to him and owned him as their Prince. He called a Parliament, to which his nobles and gentry came and crowned him, and immediately he took arms against the King, and marched in person against him.

Bards declared that Owain's victories had been foretold by Merlin, and the prophecies of Merlin in those days had their practical influence throughout England and Wales (Owen, *Anglesea*).

Grosmont can claim the distinction of having been the scene of a critical encounter between the forces of Glyndwr and those of Henry V, when still but a boy Prince. The latter occupied the castle at a moment when the Welsh, flushed with success, once more flung themselves upon the English border (Bradley, *March and Borderland*).

In 1404 the French King having promised assistance to Owain, twelve thousand men were landed at Milford Haven, from a fleet of 140 ships, and it was early in March 1405, and the sixth of the

AN ENGLISH VICTORY

war, that Glyndwr's doughtiest lieutenant, Rhys Gethin the Terrible, appeared above the Monnow with 8,000 irregulars from Gwent and Glamorgan (Parry, *Royal Visits*). This Rhys was the leader who five years previously had won the bloody battle of Pilleth, in Radnorshire. He now devastated Grosmont to such an extent that it never recovered for all time, and traces of its ruined streets are still visible (Bradley, *March and Borderland*).

Prince Henry and his friends, who occupied Grosmont castle with a small disciplined force, and some further help from Hereford, fell swiftly on the Welsh, while demoralised by the sack of Grosmont, and utterly routed them, a thousand being slain with but slight loss to the victors.

The following extract from Henry's letter to the King is interesting :—

“ Most dread sovereign, Lord and Father.”

“ In the most humble manner that I may in my heart devise, I recommend myself to your Royal Majesty, humbly praying your most gracious blessing.”

“ On Wednesday the 11th of this month of March, your rebels drew together to the number of 8,000 men, and burned part of your town of Grosmont, and there, by the aid of the blessed Trinity, your men won the field (by fair reckoning upon our return from pursuit) some say eight hundred and some a thousand, upon being questioned upon pain of death.

“ Now such amends hath God ordained you for the burning of your hundred houses in your town aforesaid.

“ Written at Hereford this said Wednesday night. Your most humble and obedient son,

Henry.”

(Bradley, *March and Borderland*.)

The Prince was only seventeen, but his services in the war were so highly thought of, that the House of Commons, led by their Speaker, requested the King that the Prince might be continually

IN THE MARCH WALL

residing in the neighbourhood, and attending to these border hostilities (Owen, *Anglesea*).

Glyndwr, for the next four years, lived in almost royal state at Harlech castle, with Sir Edmund Mortimer and his wife in attendance—but their fortunes through these years were steadily declining. Prince Hal by this time had learnt to defend the Marches to some purpose : and by 1408 he was able to invade Wales and recapture the castle of Aberystwyth. Next year Harlech itself was taken, Sir Edmund Mortimer, who defended it to the last, dying of privation during the siege.

The power of Glyndwr was now so broken that he became from this time little more than a guerrilla chieftain in the hills. When Prince Hal came to the throne in 1413, he offered pardon to Owen and his followers, but the old warrior refused to accept a favour from his foe, and he continued to make occasional raids on the Marchers' lands.

The history printed by Caxton in 1520 says that "Owen's war continued twelve years largely" (Canon Bannister, *Herefordshire*).

There is a tradition that Glyndwr, after he was subdued, disguised himself as a shepherd, assumed the name of "John of Kent," and lived with his daughter Alice, who in 1395 had married Sir John Scudamore of Kentchurch (which is a mile from Grosmont) (Williams, *Monmouthshire*).

Owain united the love of literature with the pursuits of war. Superstition was to him but a cloak, assumed in the fashion of his country. Shakespeare makes him say :

" I can call spirits from the vasty deep
And teach thee to command the devil."

He was made responsible for all sorts of supernatural performances, for it is said that he made a compact with the devil and obtained his help in all his undertakings. His most useful work was the construction in one night of the bridge over the Monnow leading to Kentchurch, for which he carried the stones from the top

GLYNDWR AND TRADITION

of the Graig. Huge boulders found at intervals down the mountain sides, tradition says, were dropped from his leathern apron and were called "Kent's stones." In the village of Trelleck there stand the three stones, upright monoliths—the Tre-leck, from which the place takes its name—stones which were flung from the top of the Trelleck Beacon, to their present place by Jack o' Kent and the Devil. The distance is about two and a half miles ; but that was nothing to Jack: "he were always a flinging of stones," and legend says they can never be broken. "Jack and the Devil they was always doing things together," but if twelve o'clock struck they had to drop the stones. The "picked stone" at Trelleck is part of the Devil's rejected house material. A cellar at Kentchurch Court used to be shown as a place where he kept horses, on which he "could fly through the air with lightning speed." They were said to be shod reversely to deceive pursuers (*Miss Wherry, Monmouthshire Witchcraft*).

The old half-finished effigy in Grosmont church used to be considered as John of Kent's, and the story went that he sold his soul to the devil, that no matter whether he were buried inside, or outside, of the church, the devil should claim it. There are people who say they have seen this tomb, half in and half out of Grosmont church, "from which the dove flew out, to show that Jack had got the better of the Devil in the end" (*Folklore*, vol. 24, No. 1).

The effigy represents a knight encircled with heater-shaped shield, and was probably intended for one of the early lords of the castle, perhaps Edmund Cruxback.

It has also been said that Owain Glyndwr died at Monnington, near Hereford, in 1415, in his 61st year, and that in 1680 a grave, supposed to be his last resting-place, was opened and the body found "whole and entire and of goodly stature" (*Harper, Marches*).

It was said to have been enacted that the statute made in the 4th year of Henry IV that "no Englishman should marry with any

IN THE MARCH WALL

of the family of Owain Glendwr " should be kept, and all letters patent made to the contrary should be void. This was had out of the papers kept in the house at Kentchurch (*Mona Antiqua*). The statute referred to is no doubt that passed in 1402 (4 Henry IV, Chap. 34), which provides as follows, and may be quoted in the original as a specimen of the Anglo-Norman dialect then in use :

" Item ordeignez et est establez qe nul homme Englois mariez a aucun Galois del Amistee ou aliance de Owen ap Glendourdy traitour a nostre Seignur le Roy ou a autre femme Galoise puis la rebellion du dit Owen ou en temps advenir soi ferra marier a ascune femme Galoise soit mys en aucun office en Gales ou en la marche dicelle."

(Also it is ordained and established that no Englishman married to any Welsh in friendship or alliance with Owen Glendower, traitor to our Lord the King, or to another Welshwoman since the rebellion of the said Owen, or who in time to come shall make himself to be married to any Welshwoman, shall be put in any office in Wales or in the said March.)

After the death of Owain, Wales came fully under the dominion of the English Kings. The power and jurisdiction of the Lords Marchers was taken away in 1535 by the Act 27 Henry VIII, Chap. 26. By this Act and an Act of 1542-3 (34 and 35 Henry VIII, Chap. 26) Wales was divided into twelve shires and Monmouthshire was annexed to England. By the third section of the former Act " Skynfreth Grousmont and Witecastle " were to be reputed and taken as part of the shire of Monmouth. By the act of 1640 (16 Charles I, Chap. 10), which abolished the Star Chamber, the jurisdiction exercised in " the Court before the President and Council in the Marches of Wales " was likewise abolished.

COMPANIONS BY THE FIRESIDE

THE HERMIT OF GROSMONT

From *Tales of Gwent and Morganwy*,

By J. Kyrle Fletcher.

It was a roadside tavern, the time, the beginning of the fifteenth century, and the locality, the lordship of Ewyas on the borders of Gwent.

Away to the west and the south rose high hills, the hills of Graig and Abergavenny. The long winding road in front led on by wood and meadow to the town of Grosmont. Through the trees could be seen the ruined towers of Grosmont Castle, ruined, spoiled and wasted by the great warrior Owain Glendwr, who had left not one castle whole in Gwent or Morganwy. Well might they call him "the spoiler." Now, the great blackened and ruined castle stood tenantless, but the man who had driven out the strangers, the "uncrowned King of Wales," had in the moment of his triumph suddenly disappeared from the scene. The King of England had drawn up a treaty of peace, but it waited for the signature of Glendwr.

In a large kitchen five or six men sat round a fire of logs, the smoke from which passed upwards through the huge chimney opening, on either side of which hung sides of bacon and a ham or two. They were a mixed group of men, a bearded shepherd from the Black Mountains, smelling woefully of the sheep pen; a broad-chested forester from Dean Forest, with his woodman's axe hung at his belt. These two sat in the corner, the one small and dark, the other big and stout, each forming a contrast to the other. An old Jew pedlar sat on his box in the corner with a little Jew boy by his side. They made a fine picture in the fire light, the white beard and hooked nose of the old man, and the clear olive skin and big black eyes of the boy. They talked apart in whispers as they ate their humble suppers from a trencher on the boy's knees. The fat man at the back, sitting on the oak chest, was the host. He had been a monk, the mark of the tonsure still showed on his head, but he had been unfrocked for misbehaviour,

IN THE MARCH WALL

and sat watching the company with his eager, beady eyes peeping from his great fat unshaven face.

The last of the company was a young squire, tall and fair, with thin strong face and aquiline nose, a younger son of one of the lords of Gwent Iscoed. He was dressed in green cloth, with tight fitting buskins, and wore a dark cloak fastened at the neck with a gold buckle, on which a crest was cunningly carved.

He sat back from the rest. His bow and sheaf of arrows showed he was bent on the chase. While these groups sat at supper suddenly blows sounded on the door, and before the tavern keeper could reach it, with a shower of oaths in the Norman-French patois, screamed in a high nasal falsetto, a huge man burst in, and glaring round on the company rolled off another string of wild oaths.

"Why wilt thou keep me waiting, pig that thou art?" he shouted, shaking his fist at the innkeeper, who shrank away from him and whined out an apology.

"Get me some supper at once. I am starving. Of the very best that thou hast."

He strode to the fireplace and stood with his back to the blazing logs and stretched his legs, for he was weary of the saddle.

The little Jew boy crouching by the old man's side happened to be in the big man's way, and he was a great man, the steward of the lordship of Grosmont.

He pushed out his iron shoe, and kicked the boy aside. The lad drew back with a cry of pain as the iron shoe struck his thigh. A livid light shone for a moment in the old Jew's eyes as the steward cursed the boy for a dog of an infidel, and ordered him back from the fire.

"Not so harshly," muttered the old man, "the child did thee no harm, and besides we pay for shelter the same as thyself."

"Silence! you toothless old Judas," and he smote the old Jew across the face. Suddenly someone from the gloom at the back of the room advanced into the circle of the firelight. It was the young squire from the south.

STOPPING A FIGHT

"Shame on thee!" he cried, speaking in Norman-French. "Shame to maltreat a child and an old man."

"What of it?" said the other, "they are only Jews, the enemies of the Holy Church, and," he went on, "what is it to thee, my young Welsh popinjay?"

"If thou art not civil," said the squire, "I shall have to flog thee."

"What, flog me, the steward of Grosmont?"

"Aye, even thee, the coward steward of Grosmont, who ran five miles and hid himself because a child said 'Owain Glendwr is coming!'"

In another moment the two had gripped each other, and stood swaying in the firelight, the rest staring blindly at them. Then the innkeeper came pressing forward, but he drew back again as the two broke away from each other, and the steward drew his short sword as the young squire unsheathed his hunting knife. The forester and the shepherd, who were both half asleep, sprang up and came between them. In the scuffle the squire had struck the steward a lusty blow across the cheek, and the crimson mark showed livid on his heavy white face.

"Stand back," he shouted. "I will kill him."

"Thou shalt fight fair or not at all," said the burly forester. "If you two gentles wish to finish your quarrel, do so like men on the green to-morrow morning."

"Yes, yes," echoed the shepherd. "Fair fight by morning light, and don't disturb our rest and comfort."

"So be it then," muttered the steward. "I'll meet him on the green to-morrow, sword to sword, or dagger to dagger. For this blow I must have blood."

"I am ready when and where thou pleasest," said the squire, and retired to his seat.

After this the steward ate his supper in silence, then lay down in the straw wrapped in his cloak, and the innkeeper came quietly over to the young squire.

IN THE MARCH WALL

"I trust thou canst use thy arms, for yonder man is a skilled fighter."

"Never fear," said the other. "I can take care of myself, but tell me, is there a priest near here, for I would shrive myself ready for this fight, so if the worse come my soul is ready."

"There is a holy hermit lives but a few paces away in the wood. Come, it is now moonlight, I will take thee to him."

Together they left the inn and walked up the road a few yards; then the innkeeper turned into a narrow path by the side of a wood.

"This is a very holy man," he whispered as they walked along. "They call him John o' Kent."

A nightingale was singing wild and loud a few yards from the path as they pushed their way through the undergrowth of birch and hazel towards a distant glimmering light. At last they came out upon an open space of soft green turf, surrounded by tall trees, which sheltered the little enclosure. On the far side was a rough hut built of hewn planks, such as the foresters build for shelter. From the tiny window shone the light which had guided them.

"I will leave thee here," whispered the innkeeper. "The moon is rising, so thou wilt find the path out again."

The young squire walked softly to the door of the hut and knocked.

"Who is there?" said a voice from within, speaking in Welsh.

"A stranger, holy father, come to confess his sins."

"Enter, my son."

The squire raised the latch and entered. The monk wrapped in his black gown, with his hood over his face, sat poring over a book by the light of a taper which burned by the side of a crucifix. The young man sank on his knees and went through the order of confession, told of the sins of his young life, his sins of passion and of pride.

"Thou must humble thyself, my son," said the monk, after he had pronounced absolution. "Humble thy foolish pride."

THE FIGHT RENEWED AND ENDED

"Not foolish, holy father. But thou canst not understand. Thou art old and living the religious life, whilst I dwell in the world and have to fight for my life at daybreak."

"But I tell thee again, thou must humble thy foolish pride," replied the monk.

"Alas. Thou canst not understand the world and its temptations."

"What," roared the monk, starting to his feet, and towering above the astonished youth; "I know nothing of the world, didst thou say? O bachgen! bachgen! the world has nothing to offer thee that I have not had my full share of. Honour, glory, the lust of conquering battle, all have been mine. Kings have stooped to me. I have led my conquering army through Wales, leaving the smoke of ruins behind me. I—but what have I said? Of this foolish pride of earth, sweet Jesu, take it from me." And he cast himself down on his knees before the cross, muttering as he struck his breast: "Oh Lord, I am not worthy."

The astonished squire stood gazing at him in speechless amazement. At last he found words, and grasping the hand of the monk drew it reverently to his lips.

"My Prince," he murmured, "only to think that I should find thee, that I should find Owain Glendwr in a hermit's cell."

"Yes, I am he," said the hermit, "but Prince no longer. I have resigned all thoughts of this world, all its folly and its pride, but I charge thee keep my secret. Thou shalt swear never to reveal it."

The young squire bowed beneath the cross and swore the oath Glendwr recited. Then they talked till the singing of the birds told them day was at hand.

Of the fight little need be said. The Norman had spent the greater part of the night drinking, so the squire speedily disarmed him, and peace was made between them by the forester and the shepherd.

From the wood close by, a monk in black watched the fight till its close.

IN THE MARCH WALL

CHAPTER III

Section

- 13 *The Knights Templars (locally from 1188).*
- 14 *Garway (the Templars') Church, 1061.*
- 15 *The Dove-cote, 1326.*
- 16 *Pembridge Castle (contemporary with Skenfrith).*
- 17 *Spoliation, 1545.*

SECTION 13

THE KNIGHTS TEMPLARS (LOCALLY FROM 1188)

“ Now down came the Templars like Kedron in flood
And dyed their long lances in Saracen blood,
And many a minstrel in harping can tell
How the Red Cross it conquered, the Crescent it fell.”

SCOTT.

As we can number many Crusaders among our “ Lords of the Castles,” the following particulars may be found interesting :

“ Twenty years before the first Crusade,” writes Hallam (*Europe during the Middle Ages*), “ Gregory VII had projected the scheme of embodying Europe in arms against Asia, a scheme worthy of his daring mind. . . . This design of Gregory was founded upon the supplication of the Greek Emperor Michael, which was renewed by Alexius Commenus to Urban II, with increased importunity. . . . Everyone knows whose hand held a torch to that inflammable mass of enthusiasm that pervaded Europe ; the hermit of Picardy, who, roused by witnessed prayers and imagined visions, journeyed from land to land, the apostle of a Holy War. This preaching of Peter, in 1095, was powerfully seconded by Urban. In the Councils of Pincenza and of Clermont, the deliverance of Jerusalem was eloquently recommended and exultingly undertaken. ‘ It is the Will of God ! ’ was the tumultuous cry that broke from the hearts

CRUSADES AND CRUSADERS

and lips of the assembly at Clermont, and those words afford at once the most obvious and most certain explanation of the leading principle of the Crusades. . . . Every means was used to create an epidemical frenzy, the remission of penance, the dispensation from those practices of self-denial which superstition imposed or suspended at pleasure, the absolution of all sins and the assurance of eternal felicity. No one doubted that such as perished in the war received immediately the reward of martyrdom."

Everyone that embarked in the Crusade wore, as a badge, the sign of the Cross ; hence the name Crusade, Fr. *Croisade*, from Lat. *Crux*, a cross.

In 1099 the Holy City was taken by storm. Godfrey of Bouillon, one of the chiefs of the Crusaders, was offered the royal crown but refused it. " I will not," he said, " wear a crown of gold in that city where my Saviour wore a crown of thorns."

It would take too long to relate here the whole history of the Crusades, full of interesting episodes as it is. For nearly fifty years the successors of Godfrey de Bouillon reigned as Kings of Jerusalem undisturbed. Then the Saracens began to encroach and a second Crusade, consisting, it is said, of one million two hundred thousand fighting men, marched for the Holy Land but effected nothing. In 1187 Saladin, Sultan of Egypt, compelled Jerusalem to capitulate, and this led to a Third Crusade under Frederick Barbarossa, Emperor of Germany, Philippe Auguste, King of France, and Richard Cœur-de-Lion. Giraldus Cambrensis, the Welsh historian, who was contemporary with Henry II, Richard I, John and Henry III, was Canon of Hereford in 1172, and accompanied Baldwin, Archbishop of Canterbury, in his pilgrimage through Wales on behalf of this Crusade. The solemn procession of Knights in full armour, with the crosses on their breasts, produced a deep impression upon the Welsh people, and the Crusaders were received with great reverence by both Welsh princes and Norman barons (Hughes, *Church of the Cymry*). In 1192 a treaty was concluded with Saladin, by which the Western nations were to be

IN THE MARCH WALL

at liberty to make pilgrimages to Jerusalem exempt from taxes and tithes, and from interdict, and their houses had the privilege of sanctuary. Never during their two centuries of history was a Templar charged with cowardice before the enemy.

“ Each dint upon his battened shield
Was token of a foughten field.”

SCOTT.

When the Crusades came to an end there was no further use for the Templars, and the Order became extinct in circumstances as tragic as any in history. Their wealth and pride had sown a harvest of fear and hatred ; their loyalty to the Pope and their exceptional privileges had long since aroused the jealousy of the Bishops ; their quarrels with the Hospitallers, which blazed into open warfare in Palestine in 1243, had shocked the moral sense of Christendom, and the exclusiveness and secrecy with which all their affairs were conducted opened a door for all manner of sinister suspicion amongst the populace.

Philip the Fair of France, being in financial difficulties, cast covetous eyes on the possessions of the Templars. In 1307, with the assistance of the Pope and the Inquisition, members of the Order were seized, imprisoned and tortured, until confessions of horrible crimes were wrung from some of them in their agony. On May 12, 1310, fifty-four Knights were slowly burned to death, refusing in the midst of the most awful agonies to perjure themselves by false confessions. In 1314 two chiefs of the Order were slowly roasted to death, declaring that the confession formerly wrung from them was untrue. By a Papal bull of 1312 the property of the Order was transferred to the Knights Hospitallers, so that it might appear that Philip failed in his object, but he no doubt secured a share of the spoils. In England the trials were conducted with more humanity, and it does not appear that torture was inflicted. Most of the prisoners escaped with penance, and the proceedings in England are scarcely to be compared with the

FORCED CONFESSIONS

surpassing horrors of the proscription in France. The last Master of the Temple, William de la Morr, died, a prisoner in the Tower, declaring the innocence of the Order. The Temple Church, consecrated in 1185, preserves the memory of the Order, which, previously to moving to the bank of the Thames, had occupied land and buildings in Holborn on the east side of what is now Chancery Lane.

(The above condensed account of the two military Orders of Knights is derived, principally, from *Chambers' Encyclopædia*.)

Here is the confession wrung by threats from John de Stoke, who was first received into the order of Knights Templars at Garway Church, near Skenfrith :—

“Thou must do it, else shall I cause thee to be put into a sack and taken to a place where thou wilt find no friend, nor will it go well with thee anywhere.”

(Wilkins' *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae*, Vol. 2, p. 387.)

Acts against the Templars. (Translated from the Latin.)

Brother John de Stoke, Chaplain, Templar, having been fully examined before the Inquisitors, appeared in the Church of S. Martin in the Vestry, London, in July 1311, before the Bishops of London and Chichester, and was sworn to tell the whole truth.

Questioned upon the first article, which begins thus :—“First that in his reception, etc.,” he answered that he was first received at Belesale in the manner in which he has elsewhere deposed, in the feast of St. Edward the Confessor, 18 years ago, by Brother Guy de Foresta, then high Preceptor in England.

One year and fifteen days having passed, after his reception, at Garway, in the diocese of Hereford, on the day of St. Andrew the Apostle, he was called unto the chamber of Brother James de Molay, then Grand Master of the Order, there being present Brothers John de Lugduno and John de Sancto George, strangers, in the

IN THE MARCH WALL

rooms aforesaid, and standing outside the door of the room two servants with swords and cudgels. And the said Brother James sat on his bed and witness on a chair before him, and the said Master asked him if he were professed and under what order, and witness explained to him the manner and form of his reception, to wit, that at his reception he promised obedience, chastity, to live without possessions and to succour the Holy Land. Then said the Master to him :—"We will see now if you are obedient," and caused the image of the crucifix to be brought in from the chapel, and inquired of witness whose image it was, etc., etc., etc.

From Dugdale we learn that Henry II granted to the Knights of the Temple—"Totam terram de lange Garway."

Among the Knights Templars committed to the Tower during the persecution of Pope Clement V., 1308, was the Preceptor of Garway, at which church some remains of the Preceptory still exist in an ancient dove-cote (columbarium) on a large scale (Woolhope, *Naturalists' Club*, 1890).

Silas Taylor, who wrote his Collections for Herefordshire during the Protectorate, tells us that in his time there were "stately ruins of a religious house" (at Garway) (*Records of Treago*).

SECTION 14

GARWAY CHURCH : ST. MICHAEL

“ Full in the midst his cross of red
Triumphant Michael brandished ;
The moonbeams kissed the holy pane
And threw on the pavement a bloody stain.”

SCOTT.

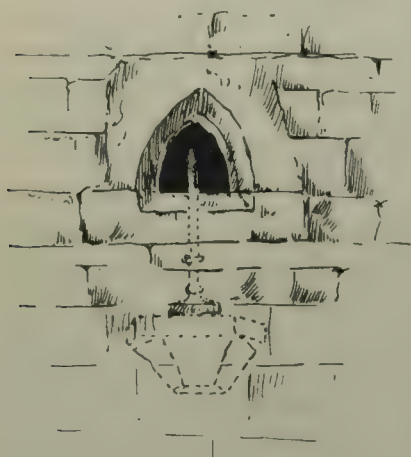
The parish of Garway adjoins Skenfrith, and about half a mile from the river stands its church, an edifice of great antiquity and interest. The Rev. P. J. Oliver Minos, a former vicar, writes :—

“ The date of the first foundation of this border church was 1061, when it was dedicated to the warrior-Archangel Michael. Its second foundation (or enlargement) took place in the reign of Henry II by the Knights of the Temple. The tower is of the twelfth century, also the Templars' Chapel adjoining the chancel. The most unusual situation of this massive tower arrests attention ; seeing that there is ample room on the west for a detached tower of defence, one cannot help asking why it was built diagonally to the nave. In the chapel, according to John de Stoke (who was Serving Brother, chaplain of the order and treasurer of the Temple in London), recruits to the order were received. On their reception they had to take a solemn oath to the Grand Master of the order, resident at Jerusalem. Transgressors of this rule were to be punished with severity by stripes, temporary separation from the brethren, and other penalties, therefore it is not improbable that this particular detached tower (also known as a prison) was built ‘ towards Jerusalem ’ as well as ‘ towards the chapel where the oath of obedience was taken.’

“ Between the tower and the nave of the church is a short passage, on each side of which is a long narrow window ; that on the west side has been filled up, leaving only a small lancet opening which formed the top of the window. On the inside of the wall,

IN THE MARCH WALL

in the passage and about six feet from the ground, there is a bracket of the same date ; this was to carry a light which, shining through the openings on either side, could be seen across the churchyard for a long distance. These lights were known as 'poor souls' lights,' from the fact that persons who benefited by them were expected to pray for the 'poor souls' in purgatory.



POOR SOULS' LIGHT

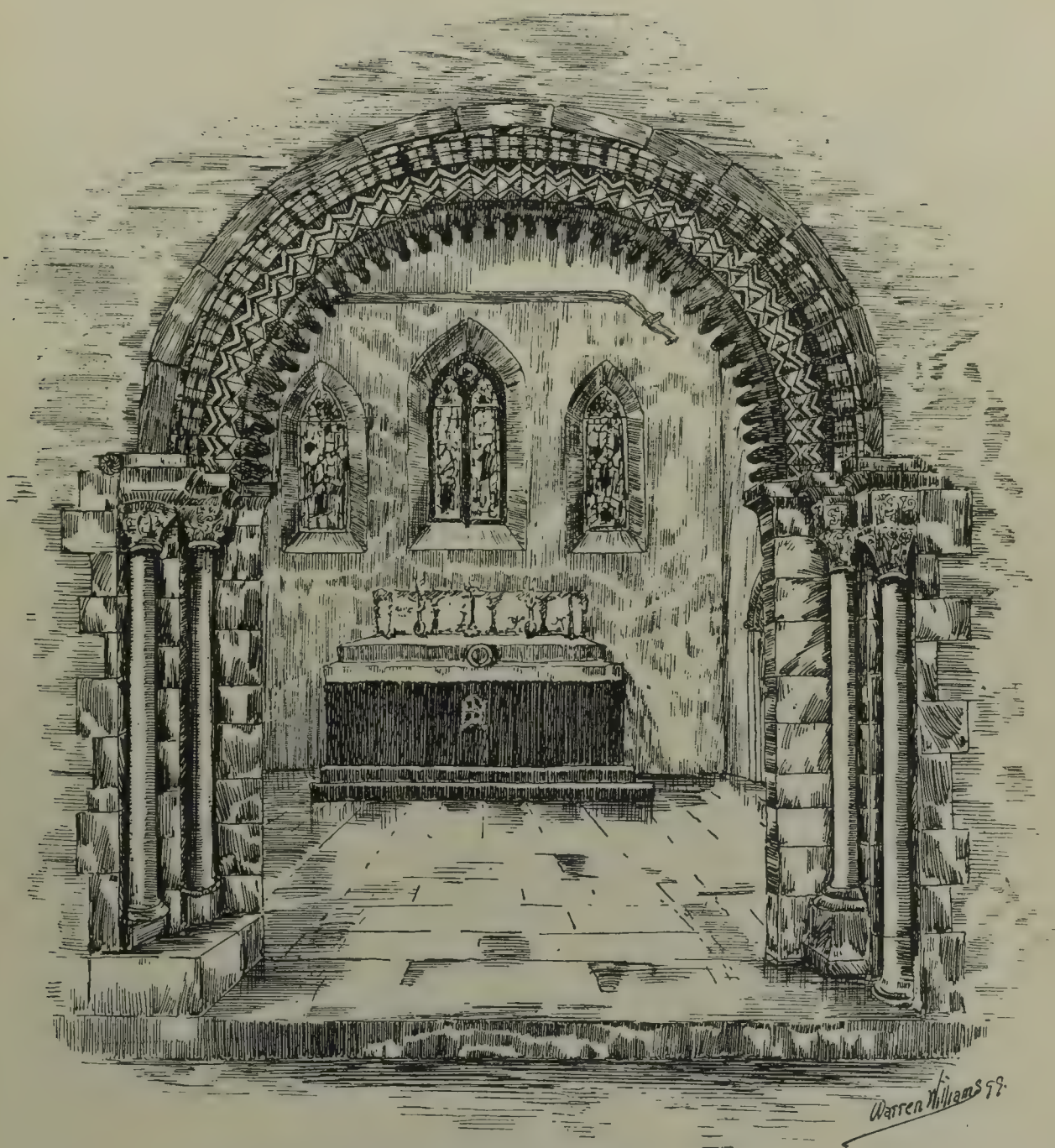
"But at Garway this light was more probably connected with the 'right of sanctuary' which this church possessed in common with all churches or chapels of the Knights Templars, and was to guide the fugitive to a place of safety when darkness had closed in. If this be so, the little opening and bracket at Garway are very interesting relics of an ancient custom and privilege which has not hitherto been noticed" (Mrs. Bagnall Oakeley).

It is said also that the tower served as a stronghold against the Welsh until succour could arrive from Skenfrith or Grosmont Castles. It is on record that the last Prior of Monmouth once took refuge in the basement.

* * * * *

The very fine chancel arch with deeply cut tooth pattern is considered to be of Transitional date, 1170. The two outer orders have late forms of chevron ornament. The carving of the capitals is contemporary with the arch, three of them with lotus leaf and other ornamentation taken from a motif common in ancient Egypt. It seemed (Professor Sayce thought) to go back to papyrus form. On the inner north side of the arch is a stone staircase which led to the rood-loft. The font is a large one of Norman character, showing 24 triangles carved on the rim and a Latin cross with a serpent entwined.

The cumbersome oak benches which are raised from the floor on



OLD NORMAN ARCH, GARWAY CHURCH

IN THE MARCH WALL

oak blocks, bear the marks of the adze, and would seem to be the amateur work of the Templars themselves.

The Communion Table has the altar stone beneath it, marked with the five crosses.

In the south transept is the Templars' Chapel, divided from the body of the church by a very beautiful Early English arcade of three arches with banded pillars.

In this, on an altar at the east end, stood a crucifix before which the initiate was required to renounce his private property and dedicate his future life to the Holy Land. On the south side is a piscina, having above it a cup with a triangle incised on it, a pair of curved wings, and below, the figure of (1) a fish, (2) a cerastes or horned adder, representing the good and evil principle (*Arch. Cambrensis*, 1909).

A long chest ($8\frac{1}{2}$ feet) of rude workmanship, with one lock, cleverly made from a horse-shoe, is preserved in this chapel; a former vicar (Mr. Minos) found it under the flooring there. It was supposed to have contained the deeds and other documents of the Templars.

The east and west windows are set unusually high up, which points to the strict secrecy observed by the Order of Knights Templars.

There are in various parts indications of Oriental influence and mysticism, carvings of serpents, and of the cerastes, fishes with tails connected, a dragon, a hand with three uplifted fingers over the north door (supposed to have been an emblem of the Knights Templars who preceded the Hospitallers in their occupation of Garway (Pres. Woolhope Club, Mr. Cecil Moore).

On the east wall exterior are a number of mason's marks, the Swastika, the Knights Hospitallers' cross, the cross of the Patriarch of Jerusalem, etc.

There is also a holy well with mediæval sculpture.

PLATE AND BELLS

CHURCH PLATE

Chalice—Silver

The chalice is of the usual Elizabethan pattern, with a foliated band which intersects three times. The spray of foliage is carried below, but not above each intersection.

The stem is equally divided by a knop with fillets above and below. There is a pattern of reed ornament at the junction of the stem to the base, also round the base. The egg and dart pattern is engraved round the base rim.

London Hall mark for 1576. Maker's mark too much worn to be deciphered.

Flagon—Silver

Round the drum runs a band of foliated pattern, in imitation of similar Elizabethan work. It was presented in 1902. London Hall marks for 1902.

Plate—Silver

This has a foliated band round the brim and the sacred monogram is in the centre of the face. It is inscribed A.M.D.G. in commemoration of Queen Victoria's 60 years reign, 1837-1897. London Hall marks for 1897 (Archd. Stanhope, *Herefordshire Church Plate*).

THE BELLS

Treble. Let us rejoice with cheerful voice, 1710.

2 God send Peace, 1710.

3 "Marian." Revd. G. F. Powys, Vicar.

Churchwardens: W. Drew

L. Williams

(Makers Llewellyn & James

Bristol, 1904)

4 Peace and good neighbourhood A.D. 1710.

Tenor Mr. Richard Hopkin—Minister.

William Barey and John Powell—C.W. 1710.

IN THE MARCH WALL

SECTION 15

DOVE-COTE AT GARWAY

“There coo’d the cushat dove
Her notes of peace and rest and love.”

SCOTT.

“It was the Norman Conqueror who first introduced into England the massive pigeon tower which has served as a type for so many succeeding generations, and with it the feudal right of the dove-cote, which survived until the time of Elizabeth, and under



GARWAY COLUMBARIUM

which the lords of the manor and rectors alone possessed the right of maintaining a dove-cote.”

“The earliest example in Herefordshire, and probably the finest in England, still stands in capital preservation at Garway, in the secluded Monnow valley. It is like all those of Norman origin, circular stone built, the top domed

over, leaving a 2 ft. opening for the pigeons to enter. It is 17 ft. 3 in. in diameter in the clear of the walls and 16 ft. in height to the spring of the arch” (Woolhope Club, 1890).

Mr. Webb deciphers an inscription which may still be seen in a half-obliterated condition on the tympanum over the doorway as follows :—

“In the year 1326 Brother Richard built this Columbarium.”

“Some mason marks, crosses of the two knightly orders and the word ‘Gilbertus’ are inscribed on the stones lining the interior. The walls are 3 ft. 10 in. thick and are lined from floor



Nest holes inside the Columbarium



Shield of the
Kingdom of Jerusalem



Shield of the
Knights Templars

BOTH SHIELDS FROM BAYEUX TAPESTRY

DESCRIPTION OF A COLUMBARIUM

to arch with tiers of nesting holes, 666 in all. The openings of the holes are about six inches square, and they recede about fourteen inches into the substance of the wall. If the cavity were of the same size throughout its depth, the bird would not have room to sit upon her scanty nest. It therefore enlarges right or left about ten inches in width. The holes are twenty inches apart in rows, each row being ten inches above the one below, and an alighting ledge of stone projects underneath each alternate tier of holes."

The dove-cotes were provided with a revolving machine called a "poteuse," by which all the nests could be visited in turn. This poteuse consists of a stout upright post with two points of iron, one at each end. One of these points works in the centre of the floor, and the other in a socket in the centre of the rafters of the roof. The upright post carries two or three arms at right angles, which carry at their extremities a ladder. A person on the ladder can ascend to any tier of nests, and can make the poteuse revolve under him.

A dove-cote answering the same description also having 666 nesting holes is to be found at Llantellen farm on the Blackbrooke estate. It is now used as a stable. The kitchen of the farm house was at one time a chapel.

Two cannon balls were found here.

The photograph is of the Llantellen dove-cote.

"It was formerly held that only the lord of the manor or the parson might erect a dove-cote, but these rights became obsolete, and pigeon houses themselves have mostly disappeared. We have now little idea of the numbers of dove-cotes (or culver houses) that once existed in England, or the number of birds that were reared in them. The reason why, in the Middle Ages, so many of these birds were kept is not far to seek. Fresh meat could only



DOORWAY
TO COLUMBARIUM

IN THE MARCH WALL

be procured during the summer, turnips and mangolds and other green crops were unknown ; hence oxen and sheep could not be fattened during the winter ; indeed, they could scarcely be kept alive, and large numbers of them were therefore slaughtered and salted down at the beginning of the winter. Those who were too poor to afford salt meat subsisted upon rye bread and salt fish, and such being the prevalent diet from Michaelmas to Midsummer, it was no wonder that many leper houses testify to this day the ravages of leprosy in England. Anything that could vary such diet was eagerly cultivated, hence we have the fishponds and stews in which carp and tench were fattened for the table, and the great round dove-cotes arose in the immediate neighbourhood of the wealthy of the castle, and of the convent ” (Cumb. *Arch. Soc.* and Mrs. Bagnall Oakeley in *Arch. Camb.*).

“ The Hospitallers had fish-ponds in this district rented by the Mynors of Treago, who were lessees of the Preceptory of Garway before the Reformation, and who were deprived of it in the civil war between Charles I and the Parliament.”

We have testimony (contained in the MSS. of the Cottonian Library in the British Museum) of the condition in which the Garway dove-cote was found after the lapse of the first 200 years. In the valuable collection of leases granted to the Hospitallers from the year 1503 to 1526, when Sir Thomas Docwra was Prior of that order in England, there is a lease to Richard Mynors and Roger Mynors his son, for fifty-one years, of the Manor of Garway with the Rectory and mill ; this bears the date July 1st 1512. A previous lease to the same Richard Mynors and Thomas Davis Lea of Garway, of the “ lands appertaining to that Preceptory ” in the Diocese of Llandaff dated July 15th 1508—and another to both Mynors, father and son, dated May 1st 1526 ” (Records of Treago).

From the Saracens of Syria the use of carrier pigeons in war passed to the Crusaders themselves. Few things impressed the imagination of the Crusaders more than the use of these birds for

THE DOVE IN HISTORY

carrying news. "It is the ordinary thing," says one writer (who himself went with the English Crusaders and Robert of Normandy upon their first Crusade), "for the people who lived in Palestine to send messages from city to city by doves."

"In A.D. 567 the greatest Mohammedan Prince of the age, 'Nur-el-din,' of Cairo and Damascus, ordered the establishment of a pigeon post in every town, and in each place gave the birds in charge to special attendants. Carrier pigeons were used very largely during the siege of Paris in 1870, and it is a well-known fact that the German War Office spends £15,000 a year on breeding pigeons for this express purpose" (1914).

"Ever since Noah's Ark, every religion seems to consider the pigeon a sacred bird. For example : every Mosque swarms with pigeons, St. Mark's at Venice, most Italian market places, the Hindoo Pandits ; and the old Assyrian empire also had them ; while Catholics make the dove an emblem of the Holy Ghost" (Sir Richard Burton).

IN THE MARCH WALL

SECTION 16

PEMBRIDGE CASTLE

(By the late Mrs. Bagnall Oakeley.)

“ Above the gloomy portal arch,
Timing his footsteps to a march,
The warder kept his guard,
Low humming as he passed along
Some ancient war-like border song.”

SCOTT.

It is somewhat singular that the Castle of Pembridge, which is within three miles of Skenfrith, should never be mentioned in connection with it, though these castles must have been erected within a few years of each other, and in fact the Monnow castles had become ruinous before any historical event is recorded of Pembridge.

The castle was built by Ralph de Pembridge, who died in 1219. Gough says that it was held by the Knights Hospitallers, whose Preceptory was at Garway, only a mile or two distant, and at the dissolution it was granted to one Baynham of Newland, who was attainted in the second year of Elizabeth. It was then sold to David Baker, who sold it to Sir Walter Pye, and the last Sir Walter sold it to George Kemble, who made it habitable in 1675.

The fortress is still in fairly good condition. It is a quadrangular structure, about 45 yards from north to south, and 35 yards from east to west. The entrance is on the south side defended by two towers of unequal size. Access to the court-yard is gained through a dark vaulted passage 33 feet long, in which two if not three gates may be traced and the grooves of the portcullises. The draw-bridge, when drawn up, fitted the space in the entrance tower, but it no longer exists, and this part of the moat is filled up. There was a considerable moat which went all round the castle. In the court-yard at the left side a door between two square-headed

SIEGE OF PEMBRIDGE CASTLE

windows leads to what was probably the kitchen, judging by the size of the fireplace. Adjoining this at the south-west corner is the "Keep" Tower, the basement of which is now used as a cellar, and the three floors are all gone. The present kitchen and parlour were once the great hall, and the staircase in the projecting turret is no doubt original. The north-west angle is supported by a very singular turret-like buttress, and the tower in the opposite angle is still more curious. There are several loop holes in the north wall, which are evidently of late date, no doubt made when the castle was an outpost of the Royalist garrison of Monmouth. It suffered severely in the campaign of 1644, when it was besieged by Colonel Massey. "And at last the garrison, having no further subsistence, were forced to surrender." The position of this castle after the introduction of gunpowder was essentially weak, as it was commanded by the rising ground on the east side. Some earthworks on the lower side of the moat are curious, and may have been constructed in order to prevent missiles being sent through the windows (*Bristol and Glos. Arch. Society*, Vol. XX.).

* * * * *

1914. Pembridge Castle has lately been bought by Dr. Headley Bartlett, and is being restored as a residence.

IN THE MARCH WALL

SECTION 17

SPOLIATION (1545)

“ Their tapers shall be quenched, their belfries mute,
And 'mid their choirs unroofed by selfish rage
The warbling wren shall find a leafy cage.”

(W. OWEN.)

The history of British Christianity during the first three hundred years is largely based on the records of heathen Rome. Many of the oral traditions are preserved in the Welsh Triads, the “Triads of the Isle of Britain,” as they are called. These contain some of the most curious and valuable fragments preserved in the Welsh language. They tell of persons and events from the earliest times to the beginning of the seventh century.

The traditions of the Welsh Triads, like traditions in general, contain much that is true, as well as much that is doubtful. For example : the tradition that Christianity was first introduced into Britain by released British prisoners of war, said to have learned the faith from St. Paul, their fellow prisoner in Rome, is very probable, viewed in the light of contemporary Roman history. It is a fact that this neighbourhood was the cradle of the Christian Faith in these islands, for we are told that Caradoc, King of the Silures (of which kingdom Monmouthshire formed a part), called by the Romans ‘Caractacus,’ was carried captive to Rome with his wife and daughter Gwladys, and the time of their imprisonment was contemporaneous with the imprisonment of St. Paul.

The reference by the Roman poet Martial, in his ode wherein he extols the character of Claudia (the Roman name given to Gwladys), “a British lady married to Pudens, one of the earliest Roman Governors of Britain,” agrees with the reference by St. Paul in 2 Tim. iv. 21. The Triads say that Gwladys and Linus, the children of Caradoc, on their return to Britain, preached and promoted Christianity, converting their countrymen from the Pagan rites of the Druids, and “we have abundant evi-

PARISH NOMENCLATURE

dence to show that this conformity to the Christian faith was no mere outward show. Every parish takes its name from one of the early Welsh saints, to whom the church was dedicated, as for instance, Llanteilio, the church of St. Teilo, Llangattock, the church of St. Cadog, Digestow, the church of St. Dingat, testify alike to the zeal of the Welsh Bishops and the piety of the Welsh Princes, by whom these churches were founded and endowed” (Sir H. Mather Jackson, *Arch. Report*, 1896).

The Welsh border of the counties of Monmouth and Herefordshire was covered with castles and monastic houses. “A manuscript preserved in the British Museum written in the early part of the reign of Henry III, furnishes us with the names of the most important of such buildings then existing, amongst others, ‘Prioratus, Monemue, Castella Skenfreid, Grosmonde’” (Parry’s *Royal Visits*).

We are told by a county historian that “it is to the Lords Marcher that we owe the numerous great religious houses for which this district is celebrated. They are the magnificent atonements for enormous crimes.”

“To whatever cause these institutions owe their foundations, the effect on the district on the whole must have been a good one, and must have taught what these orders were founded to teach—the sanctity of labour and a life devoted to the soil; and when we remember that in many cases, if not in all, the cloister was sought, not because of any special call to a religious life, but from a desire to escape from the unsettled surroundings of the civil life, we may well believe that there were always those anxious to embrace a life which offered so quiet a haven amongst such troublous times; and that, of the eighteen religious houses that were suppressed at the Reformation, some at least were deserving of a better fate” (Sir H. Mather Jackson).

By the passing of an Act of Parliament to legalise the spoliation of monastic property, the revenues of abbeys and convents and the untold riches of their churches and shrines, together with the patrimony of the poor, passed within the space of four years into the

IN THE MARCH WALL

possession of the King, and were used as his own private property. Sometimes even Cromwell seems to have paused in his work of desecration and pulling down, and to regret the havoc he was causing.

At Stamford he says : " I have left as yet visible, at the Grey Friars, a goodly image of copper gilt, the said image being laid upon marble, and made for Blanche of Lancaster (lady of Skenfrith). It is very beautiful, and I resolved to know the King's grace concerning it " (Cardinal Gasquet, *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries*).

Many of the monastic estates were retained by the Crown several years, but eventually they were all sold or granted to secular proprietors after the movables and materials of the buildings were disposed of for the use of the King. It is a fact that many monasteries were allowed to purchase temporary continuance by heavy payments to the royal exchequer. The revenue of the King at this time has been estimated at about £140,000 a year, and the property confiscated must have been worth some £50,000,000 of our money (Knight, *Suppression of Monasteries*).

The spoliation threatened to proceed even to the Universities, and the King procured an Act for their dissolution in the year 1545, but they were mercifully saved, through the pleadings of Queen Catherine Parr.

In every monastery, not only was a record kept of the transactions of the Society, but the political events of the period were regularly noted as striking testimony to the enormous sacrifice which the Reformation cost us in literature alone. The libraries, the accumulation of ages, were left to the ignorant tiller of the soil, who seized their contents for the sake of the parchment they contained. Some books were reserved to scour their candlesticks ; some to rub their boots ; some sent to grocers and soap-boilers ; some sent over the sea to bookbinders, not in small numbers, but by ships full, to the wondering of foreign nations. A single merchant purchased, at 40 shillings each, two noble libraries to be used as waste grey paper (Spellman's *Hist. of Sacrilege*).

DESTRUCTION OF LIBRARIES

“The loss of good books was irreparable. Never had we bene offended for the loss of our Lybraryes, beyng so many in nombre, and in so desolate places for the more parte, if the chiefe monumentes and most notable workes of our most excellent wryters, had bene reserved. If there had bene in every shyre of Englande but one solempne Lybrarye to the preservacyon of those noble workes and preferment of good lernynge in oure posteritye, it had bene sumwhat ; But to destroye all without consideracyon, is and wyll be unto Englande for ever, a moste horryble infamy amonge the grave Senyours of other nacyons.” (Thus Bale, one of the bitterest enemies the monks ever had, is forced to lament the great damage the learned world sustained at the Dissolution.) (*Notitia Monastica*, 1695.)

In a letter addressed to John Skydmore, or Scudamore, gentleman usher of the King's chamber, one of the surveyors of divers abbeys within the county of Hereford and others appointed to be suppressed, the Earl of Shrewsbury requested that the abbey of Wormesley might be spared, for many of his ancestors were buried within its precincts, but the King could not prevail upon himself to let go his hold, and the priory was surrendered in January 1536 ” (Phillott, *Diocesan Hist.*).

The following items are selected from papers of the Scudamores of Kentchurch, now in the British Museum, which contain the accounts of John Scudamore, the King's receiver for the counties on the borders of Wales :—

“Mr. John Scudamore Receivour generale unto the Kyng's Majestie, of the dissolved possessions of Salop, and to every of them ”—

IN THE MARCH WALL

SOLD

				℥	s.	d.
A Holy water stock	...	...	XX	0	1	8
The pavement of the Quyere	...	XIII	III	0	13	3
The Fryars carved setes	...	VI	VIII	0	6	8
A Masse Boke	...	...	XI	0	11	0
A cope	...	...	IJ	0	2	0
A vestment of tawnay sarcnett.						
Albes of bawdekyn with images						
of our Lady	...	...	XVII	0	17	0
One cope greene, one parti-						
colowyed and rewyde	...	XXI	J	1	1	0 $\frac{1}{4}$
Old bokes in the Quyere...	...	XI		0	11	0
A plpytt	...	...	III	0	3	0
A hyegh Alter	...	...	IIIJ	0	4	0
Grave stone of Alabasta	...	...	XIJ	0	12	0
The Organs	...	...	XXVJ	VIII	1	6 8

All the shyngle, tyle, tymbre, glasse, iron, marble pavements of the Church, Quyere, Chapelles, with rode lofte and pictures of Chryste, Marie and John, being in the Church and Chancelle to be taken down, defaced and carried away by the said Loveson and Ward at their own proper costes and charges, and to pay for all the premises to the kyng and his successors.

XV Octobr XXX yeare Henrici-Regis VIII.

“The reverend pile lies wild and waste,
 Profaned, dishonoured and defaced;
 Through storied lattices no more
 In softened light the sunbeams pour,
 For dark fanaticism rent
 Altar, screen and monument.”

SCOTT.

CHAPTER IV

Section

- 18 *St. Weonards.*
- 19 *Treago (from 1100).*
- 20 *The Cwm (Jesuit College of St. Xavier—founded 1622).*
- 21 *Welsh Newton Church.*

SECTION 18

ST. WEONARDS

(About 4 miles N.E. of Skenfrith.)

The church of St. Weonard is called in Liber Landavensis "Llan-sant-Gwainerth of the Book of Llan Dâv," a British saint said to have been decapitated by the Anglo Saxons. He seems to have been a very holy man and a hermit, for Blount, who lived in the seventeenth century, saw in the church, in a stained window, on the north side of the chancel, the picture of an ancient man with a beard holding a book in one hand, an axe in the other, and underneath written in old characters "St. Wenardus Heremytr."

The church, which is of late Perpendicular style, contained a good deal of stained glass in Blount's time, but most of it now exists only in a fragmentary condition.

In the east window were depicted the Saviour, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the letters I.H.S. with the arms of the Baskerville Mynors, and Pye. In the Mynors Chapel "a crucifix and other pictures," in another window St. Michael killing the Dragon, the inscription partly effaced. In a third window a man praying, with two Welsh inscriptions. Blount gives them thus: ("interpreted by a learned Briton) Let us hope still, let us hope, tho' the Hart break; Stil let us hope."

The fourteenth century stained window in the "Treago aisle" was found buried in the churchyard in boxes, about a hundred and seventy years ago, and was taken down to Treago and kept there

IN THE MARCH WALL

until it was put back into the church, by the Mynors family about seventy years ago. Probably it was thus hidden for safe keeping during the raids of the Scots in 1645, when this neighbourhood suffered severely.

A large mound or tump near the church was opened by Mr. Mynors and Mr. Wright, F.S.A., in 1855. It had been employed from time immemorial as the scene of village fêtes, and especially for Morris dancing, but the excavation clearly showed that the remoter use had been of a wholly different character. They discovered a mass of ashes, and fragments of human bones. No traces of urns were met with, though Roman coins have been found in the churchyard from time to time. In the absence of material evidence, it is impossible to assign a date to the tumulus, but Mr. Wright is inclined to believe it is of Roman origin (H. Robinson, *Mansions of Herefordshire*).

According to tradition St. Weonard lies buried here in a golden coffin. Others say he is buried on the top of a golden coffin, filled with gold, and that on the lid is inscribed :

“Where this stood
Is another twice as good
But where that is
No man knows.”

(Mrs. Leather, *Folk-lore of Herefordshire*.)

THE CHURCH SILVER

CHURCH PLATE

Chalice No. 1.—The bowl is oviform, standing on a finely moulded baluster stem. The base is a plain circular one. On the face of the bowl is pounced the initials T. I. D. with an ornamental connecting band.

Marks.—London Hall marks for 1628. Maker's mark, A.1. with a mullet above and below in a shaped shield.

Dimensions.—Height 9. Depth of bowl 4, diameter of mouth 4, diameter of base $3\frac{7}{8}$.

Chalice No. 2 with Cover Paten.—The bowl is shaped as a bell with a small vertical lip. The stem is short, with a small knop, finishing on a circular base with three mouldings.

Marks.—London Hall marks for 1715. Maker's mark B. A. for Richard Bayley, ent. 1708 (O.E.P. 1717).

Dimensions.—Height $7\frac{1}{4}$, depth of bowl $4\frac{3}{8}$, diameter of mouth $3\frac{7}{8}$, diameter of base $3\frac{3}{8}$.

The Cover Paten has a plain handle and mouldings with the same marks as on the cup.

Flagon.—This piece has a handle, thumbpiece, and moulded cover with a circular knob on the top. There is a plain fillet mould round the base of the drum, which finishes on a moulded base.

Marks.—London Hall marks for 1776. Maker's mark E. I. for Edward Iay, ent. 1756 (O.E.P. 1783).

Plate.—A circular plate with incised flat mouldings round the rim. It has a coat of arms (unknown) in the centre surrounded by a mantling of conventional feathers.

Marks.—London Hall marks for 1677. Maker's mark G. G.

IN THE MARCH WALL

with a pellet below in a shaped shield, probably for George Garthorn (O.E.P. 1682).

Dimensions.—Diameter 12, depth $\frac{7}{8}$.

(Archd. Stanhope, *Herefordshire Church Plate.*)

The bells here are six in number. The inscriptions are as follows :—

- Treble. “ 1801. J. Rudhall fecit.”
2. “ John Rudhall fecit 1801.”
3. “ J. Taylor & Co., Founders, Loughborough, 1882 ”
 (recast).
4. “ Prosperity to the Parish of St. Weonards, 1801.”
5. “ J. Rudhall fecit Meliora Mynors, Treiago, 1801.”
Tenor. “ These bells were cast at Gloucester by J. Rudhall
 1801.”

SECTION 19

TREAGO

“ All houses wherein men have lived and died
Are haunted houses. Through the open doors
The harmless phantoms on their errands glide
With feet that make no sound upon the floors.

“ There are more guests at table, than the hosts
Invited, the illuminated hall
Is thronged with quiet inoffensive ghosts,
As silent as the pictures on the wall.

“ We have our title deeds to house and lands,
And kindred too, of earlier dates,
From graves forgotten stretch their dusty hands
And hold in mortmain still their old estates.”

LONGFELLOW.

About four miles from Skenfrith in a well wooded and picturesque valley, stands one of the oldest inhabited and most interesting houses in the kingdom, the property of the Mynors family, and said to be one of the seven houses in England which has never changed hands since the Conquest.

“ The Mynors are of a very ancient house, and have been of a good estimation ; seated at Treago from the Norman Conquest and still continuing there.

“ The castle retains externally the entire square and shape of the original building, with ‘ Tournelles ’ at the four quarters, and though some part of the original stonework has in the lapse of time crumbled and decayed, it has been restored exactly upon the old foundations. The name of ‘ de Minores ’ is in the Battle Abbey Roll, an ancestor of the family having come with William of Normandy to England, from whom the land was probably a grant. From the rude manner in which the castle is built, it was probably

IN THE MARCH WALL

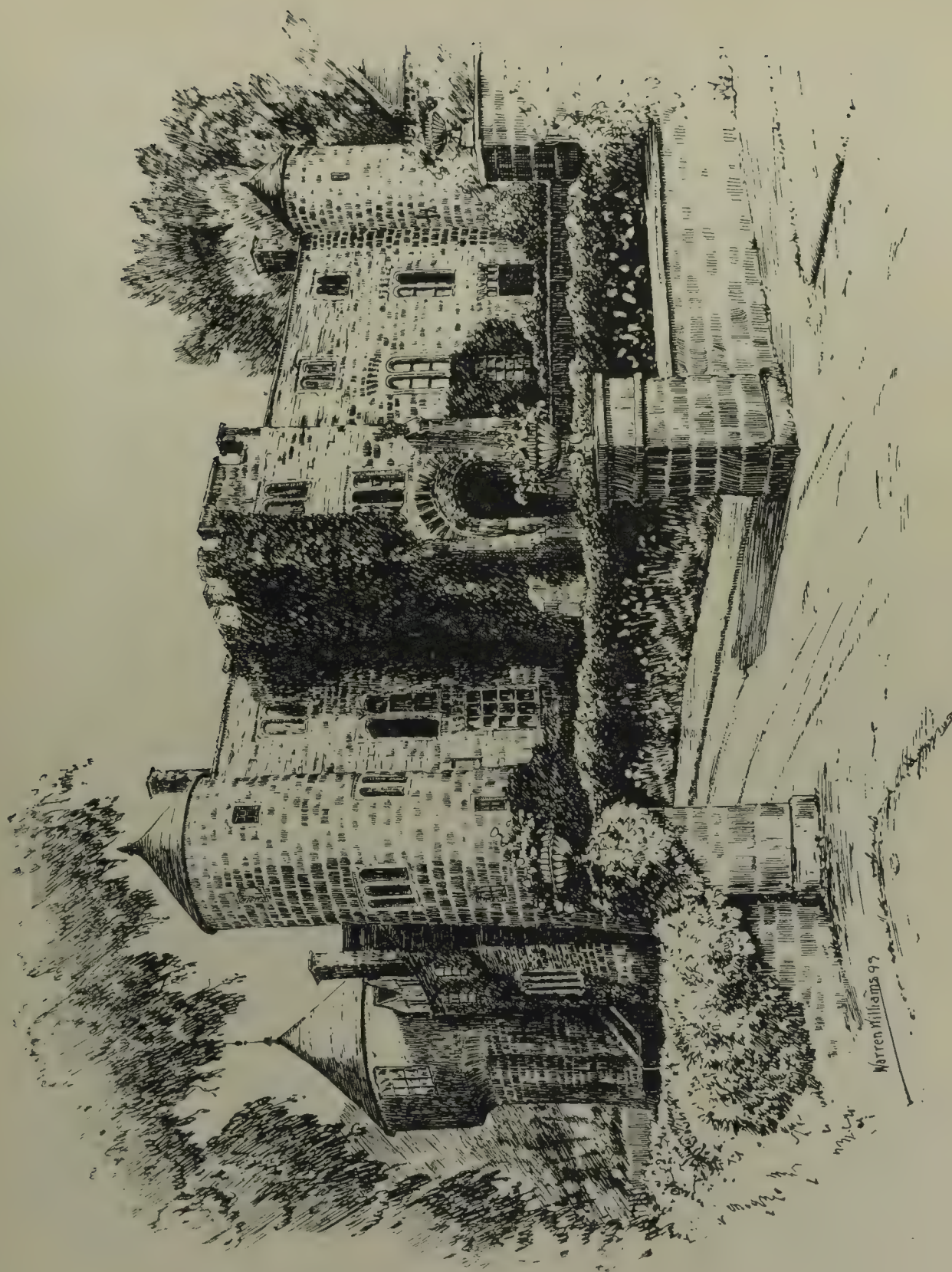
erected soon after the Conquest, when strength and security were more studied than architecture " (*Records of Treago*).

The castle is quadrangular in shape, having at each corner a small tower pierced with œillet holes, for the discharge of bolts and arrows. The external walls are very massive, that on the south side being seven feet thick, and there are indications that in many places there are secret passages and chambers. The mansion was at one time surrounded by a second wall, the intervening space being employed to protect sheep and cattle from the forays of Border marauders. Beyond the outer wall was a wet moat, fed by the river Garron (Robinson, *Mansions of Herefordshire*).

Some changes were made in the reign of Henry VII when the entrance porch on the north-east side was added, and where there still remains in the centre of the ceiling, the Tudor Rose. There is no doubt the chief room at this time was the Hall, also to the north, which was the whole height of the house, the remains of a Gothic oak ceiling being still visible (Rev. J. Webb).

The interior was also an open courtyard, where cattle could be secured in times of Border raids. There was, and still is, a well of water in the centre, plenty of water being a great necessity when no one could venture out. In former days there were no windows but to this court—there being merely slits or œillets on the outside through which the archers might shoot. Some of the walls are six feet thick, and the floors of different levels. Internally the alterations have of course been very numerous in order to adapt the low dark rooms to modern requirements—and it is now an ideal residence, combining the historical with the comforts of to-day. It is one of the most interesting mansions in the county and well worthy of the archæologist's study (Moss, *Pilgrimages to Old Houses*).

In 1637, Charles I, being anxious to alter the worship of the Scottish Church, insisted on the members using Archbishop Laud's Prayer Book. The new prayer book they hated, as being not only English, but Popish, and when the new service was read, it caused



TREAGO

IN THE MARCH WALL

much rioting, in which all Scotland took part. In 1639 the Scots broke out into rebellion. In June 1645 they marched southwards as far as Gloucestershire and, after the King's defeat at Naseby, their leader, Lord Leven, was directed to invest Hereford, but upon the approach of Charles with an army he was forced to raise the siege. The Scots left a bad name behind them for plunder for many miles round Hereford, and this neighbourhood suffered severely, for they sacked the churches and plundered the farmers, seizing all forage, provisions, cattle and horses that they could carry away (Phillott, *Diocesan Hist.*).

"During one of these raids (in 1645) they were seen by the terrified inmates of Treago, descending the hill behind the castle. Their lord (who was a Royalist) was absent, and only the lady remained in charge. She, however, was equal to the occasion, and with wonderful presence of mind, ordered the doors to be thrown open and welcomed the enemy as friends, providing them with refreshment. The Scots were delighted with their entertainment, and with the chatelaine who presided. She even assumed an air of cheerfulness and condescended to amuse them by singing, accompanying herself upon the lute. The officers were in repute for that gallantry to ladies which is consistent with a sense of honour. The soldiers departed gratified ; and thus, for the sake of courtesy, and for the Lady's sake, Treago was spared from pillage, nor is there any account of it in the list of plundered places.

"A life-sized portrait of this courageous woman, dated 1619, still hangs in the hall (1894), and the dignity and determination expressed in both face and figure are very striking. Her gown is of black velvet with closely fitting sleeves, and large lace ruff and gauntlets, of which the tracery is most exquisitely portrayed. She wears the 'farthingale' of that period, a high-crowned velvet hat, with band of gold embroidery. Round her neck and reaching below her waist, is the necklace of seven strings of pearls which appears in generations of the Mynors' portraits. Her right hand rests upon a dagger, which from her determined mien one could

A GRUESOME PICTURE

imagine that she would use, where tact and diplomacy failed ” (*Records of Treago*).

In the gallery there is a most remarkable and horrible picture, painted after death, of Father Harcourt, another Jesuit priest who, like Father Kemble, was connected with the Jesuit College at the Cwm, and who, like him, suffered the same fate, being hanged, drawn, and quartered in London at the time of the fictitious plot of Titus Oates in 1679. The eyes are closed and the hands clasped and the features wear a calm and peaceful expression ; the head and neck bear traces of the execution.

Extract from a letter by Mr. Weld 30th July 1861 :—

“ Perhaps one feature in the picture may have escaped your notice. At the back of the figure, and hanging against the wall, appears a black object, which I am inclined to think represents one of the ‘ manacles ’ with which the jailers of those days had unlimited discretion to torture the unfortunate prisoners in their power. Their hands were screwed into them, and so they were hung up for hours. The other emblems in this picture of this Father’s sufferings, are plain enough—the barred window, the halter, the knife, the bloody axe and skull, indicate his imprisonment and the circumstances of his death. The manacle is, so far as I know, a unique representation.” At the back of the canvas is written in large letters “ HARCOURT.”

The account of the trial of Father Harcourt is given in Baker’s *Chronicle*. See also the State Trials (folio ed.), ii, 829.

IN THE MARCH WALL
Copy of the title page of Pamphlet :—

“ SOME ACCOUNTS OF THE
TRYALS
AND CONDEMNATION OF THE
FIVE NOTORIOUS JESUITES
POPISH PRIESTS AND TRAYTORS
VIZ :

THOMAS WHITE

WILLIAM HARCOURT

JOHN FENWICK

JOHN CAVERN

ANTHONY TURNER

&

ANTHONY LANGHORN (The Counsellor)

Found guilty of High Treason for conspiring to murder the King,
subvert the Government, root out the Protestant Religion and
establish

POPERY

On a fair Tryal by virtue of a commission of
OYER & TERMINER ”

At the Old Bailey, June 13th and 14th 1679.

PREFERRED HANGING TO PERJURY

William Waring—alias Harcourt

1610 to 1679

Jesuite, best known by his assumed name of Harcourt (also known as Barrow), in 1678 declared rector of the College of St. Ignatius. This rendered him conspicuous, and from the commencement of the Oates plot, he was singled out as one of its victims. By constant change of dress and lodgings he eluded the pursuivants, till 7th May 1679, when he was betrayed by a servant, and committed by the Privy Council to Newgate. He was tried 12th June with Father Whitbread the Provincial, and Fathers Caldwell, Gavin, and Turner, and suffered with them at Tyburn on 20th June, 1679. His portrait has been engraved by Martin Bouché, and there is another portrait in the Dutch print of Titus Oates in the pillory (*Dictionary of National Biography*).

On Friday, 20th of June, they were all laid on sledges, and drawn from Newgate to Tyburn. When they had ended their prayers, and the ropes were about their necks, there came a horseman in full speed crying as he rode, "a pardon, a pardon" and with difficulty he made through the press to the Sheriff, who was under the gallows to see the execution performed. This pardon expressed how the King most graciously, and out of his clemency, had granted them their lives, which by treason they had forfeited, upon condition they would acknowledge the conspiracy and lay open what they knew thereof. They all thanked His Majesty for his inclination of mercy, but as to any conspiracy, they knew of none, much less were guilty of any, and therefore could not accept any pardon under those conditions.

After a short recollection, the cart was drawn away and they were permitted to hang till they were dead, and then were cut down and quartered. The quartered bodies were given to their friends, by whom they were buried under the north wall of St. Giles' in the fields. Divers Catholics dipped their handkerchiefs in their blood, which, as we are credibly informed, have been the instruments of great cures.

IN THE MARCH WALL

Particulars of Father Aylworth (alias Harcourt) will be found in Section 20 on the cwm.

TREAGO

“THE POPE’S HOLE”

“ See that old house ! Four square about it stands
With towers at every angle firmly set
To strengthen it, make its defences sure—
And yet, so massive are its ancient walls,
These towers superfluous do well nigh seem.
What tales could they of old chivalrous times,
Of border wars and doughty deeds, declaim,
Could they—by miracle—have gift of speech.

“ The legend goes, that once a holy priest,
Hard prest and harassed by fanatic foes,
Was, in the cell that tops a northern tower,
For safety by his friends immured.
The day through lofty grating found its way,
To light his pious orisons,
As with clasped hands and visage wan and pale,
With shirt of hair, and cruel scourge of cord,
He most devoutly prayed and penance sped.
When night returned (it seemed with twofold gloom)
His beads the wakeful friar with fervour told,
Fixing his strained and failing eyes upon
The sacred crucifix, which hung on high.
Thus pent within that narrow gloomy cell
In that dire dungeon—lonely place of doom—
Sore did his ardent restless spirit chafe.
In course of time, and of a lengthened siege,
The ancient house was taken by his foes,

“ THE POPE’S HOLE ”

And all his kin by ruthless hands were slain
Or captured, and the hapless friar walled in,
Was left to die a lingering awful death—
Starvation’s victim ; and when many years
(It might be centuries) had onward rolled,
In that strange sepulchre, before the Cross,
With arms outstretched—in death’s tremendous hour—
Prone was his body found
Himself a Cross.”

PAX.

—*From a poem by J. A. N. Booker.*
Treago, 1899.

IN THE MARCH WALL

SECTION 20

THE CWM

“ It hath great store of chambers, finely wrought,
That time alone to great decay hath brought—
It makes us pause—and think on elder days.”

Francisco de Xavier, 1506–1552, Jesuit Missionary and Saint, was the son of Juan de Jasso, privy councillor to Jean d'Albret, King of Navarre, and was born at his mother's castle of Xavero.

In 1528 he made the acquaintance of Ignatius Loyola and was one of seven, including Loyola himself, who took the original Jesuit vows on August 15th, 1534 (*Encyc. Brit.*).

He died in 1552, at San-chau, an island on the coast of China, and his body was brought to Goa in 1554, when the grave was opened and the face was found ruddy and fresh coloured like that of a man in sweet repose. In 1744, at a visitation of the relics of St. Francis, the body was environed with a shining brightness, nor had it suffered the least alteration or symptom of corruption (Butler, *Lives of Martyrs*).

Loyola is said to have selected Xavier as his own successor at the head of the Society of Jesus.

The College of St. Xavier at the Cwm, in the valley of the Monnow, close to Llanrothal, one of the three great Jesuit colleges in England, was founded in 1622.

The Jesuits abounded in Monmouthshire, and to bait and persecute them was always popular. The pursuit of “recusants” was carried on with activity (Phillott, *Diocesan Hist.*).

We see from the letters of Robert Bennett, Bishop of Hereford, preserved among the state papers in 1605, that he asked for a “Commission Ecclesiastical” or a License to hunt out Catholics, but could not obtain it without paying twenty pounds “in charge of drawing, writing and sealing” (Father Abbott).

PURSUIT OF JESUITS

The Bishop writes to Lord Salisbury in June 1605, that "upon Wednesday last at evening, Sir James Scudamore and other justices of peace, with such aid as I could give them, went unto the Darren and other places adjoining, to make search and apprehend Jesuits and priests, their abettors and receivers certain days before, being



WINDOW OF THE CWM

riotously abroad with weapons, and did make diligent search all that night and day following, from village to village, from house to house, about thirty miles compass, near the confines of Monmouthshire, where they found altars, images, books of superstition, relics of idolatry, but left all desolate of men and women. Except here

IN THE MARCH WALL

and there an aged woman or child, all were fled into Wales, and but one man apprehended : all that circuit of rude barbarous people carried headlong into these desperate courses by priests (whereof there is great store) and principal gentlemen, lords of towns and manors there. They are all fled into woods, and there they will lurk till the assizes be past ” (Recusant’s papers, P.R. Office, James I). ”

In a letter to Mr. Scudamore, in September 1626, Bishop Godwin of Hereford mentions one from the Privy Council, desiring him “ to apprehend Popish Priests, of whom many lurk about in the country ; for one of them, G. Berrington, he says, ‘ I have laid all the gynes I wot of ’ ” (Phillott, *Diocesan Hist.*).

Captain Scudamore, of Kentchurch, gave information concerning those of the Cwm, and he accused Mr. Milbourne, a Justice of the Peace, whose house was in the vicinity, of protecting the College and the Romanists in general. In 1678 there was a strong effort on the part of the House of Lords to put down Catholicism, and more particularly the Jesuits, and it was ordered by the “ Lords Spiritual and Temporal ” in Parliament :

“ That it be commended to Herbert, Lord Bishop of Hereford, to enquire into information which they have received concerning a place called ‘ The Cwm,’ and to give this house a full account thereof, as soon as his Lordship conveniently can ” (*Ibid.*).

The following extract will be found interesting : (from a correspondent, *Hereford Times*) : “ I send you a copy of a rare and most interesting document which goes to prove that many of the books in the ancient chained library at Hereford Cathedral are from the suppressed College of Jesuits, St. Francis Xavier, at the Cwm, Llanrothal. A large number of these can easily be identified by the name of ‘ Father William Morgan,’ of Blackbrooke, who wrote his name in German characters. He held the lease of the Cwm from the Marquis of Worcester. Bishop Herbert Croft, who himself had begun life at Douai as a Jesuit, but was afterwards restored to the Church of England and became strongly opposed to

FURTHER PURSUIT OF JESUITS

Romanism, appointed Captain Scudamore to enquire into the affair, and the following is an extract from his letter concerning the Cwm, dated

Kentchurch,

December 24th 1678.

“ All the neighbourhood do testify that this is a place to which Popish priests do oft-times resort. Its situation without, and apartments within, do testify that it is a place of habitation of such as are fearful of being discovered. It hath fair chambers to which belong a study and chairs, tables and standishes, as is usual in colleges, and a fair library of books which may be compared with them in the halls and colledges of the Universities, many of them English books against Protestant writers, as Laud, Chillingworth, Stillingfleet, etc., not yet bound. The library was concealed with so much skill that it was difficult to discover it, and though they had time to remove it, yet we found many papers that mentioned their Society.”

In Kentchurch there is a tablet “ to the memory of John Scudamore gent., an active prosecutor of Jesuits 1679.”

From Foley's *Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus*:

“ In the Parish of Llanrothal in the county of Hereford, there are two houses called the Upper and the Lower Cwms. This estate did formerly belong to Edward (Henry), Lord Marquis of Worcester, who did let it for four score and nineteen years, to one William Morgan. One of the houses, a fair genteel house, wherein there are six lodging chambers, each one a convenient study to it, with a standish left in them, besides several other lodging rooms. The other house is also a goodly country house, with several chambers and studies, all in very good repair, but the furniture now removed we cannot yet find whither.

“ The Cwm is seated at the bottom of a thick wooded and rocky hill, with hollow places in the rocks wherein men may conceal

IN THE MARCH WALL

themselves and there is a very private passage from one of the houses to the wood.

(This secret passage connected the two houses occupied by the Jesuits and led from the Cwm to the Scenshall.)

“There are one and twenty chimneys, and a great many doors to go in and out at, likewise many private passages from one room to another. There was a study found (the door whereof was very hardly to be discovered, being placed behind a bed and plastered over like the wall adjoining). In this was found great store of divinity books and others ; several horse loads, many whereof were written by the principal learned Jesuites. And there were found two paper books in folio, in the front of one written ‘*Ordinationes variae pro Collegio Sancti Xaverii.*’

“*Ordinationes* doth not here signify ordination, as we commonly understand it, but orders and rules, sent from the Generals of the Jesuites Caraffa, and Palus Oliva to the Jesuites here inhabiting, as also instructions from the Provincials living in London and those here. The other paper book, the great benefactors being Queens, princes, nobles and several others of this, and divers other nations, who have contributed towards the foundation of the Jesuite Colleges, or the maintenance of them, and likewise the number of masses appointed to be said for their souls.

“There was also found a Latin book in folio, declaring that there is in London a college dedicated to St. Ignatius, one in Wales to St. Xaverius, a third in Staffordshire, or Lancashire, to St. Aloysius ; which colleges when England shall be reduced to the obedience of the Pope, shall never be altered, as this book directs. There are several books lately written and printed against the Protestant religion, many popish catechisms, and some Welsh popish books and manuscripts fairly and lately written. Likewise a picture of Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Society, and the most remarkable actions and pretended miracles of his life not only in printed books, but in pictures in several sheets which refer to Ribadeneira’s book of Loyola’s life.



THE MONNOW, IN THE DARREN GLEN

IN THE MARCH WALL

“There is a loose paper dated March 1st 1652 (it seems this was then founded a college), in which directions were given that an account of the revenue and disbursements should be sent yearly to the college in Rome. It is there also mentioned that the same year there were :

“Baptized—34.

“Reconciled to the Church of Rome—155 (a great number).

“Those that were fallen from the Church and regained—15—
and other matters.

“One letter written by the Provincial to them of this house therein complaint is made—

‘That there is not care enough made to send young men to Rome, there to be bred up in the English College and for which,’ he saith, ‘the Pope was much displeased, and threatened to take away their college there, and fill it up with scholars of some other nation and order.’ Several Jesuite priests are mentioned, who were used to resort thither and say mass, but the altar with all the ornaments thereof was taken down and conveyed away, only the altar stone remaining : with five crosses cut in it, one at each corner and one in the middle.

‘Two vestments with some other small matters were found in two boxes hid in the wood. It seems the other things were but newly removed, and they had begun also to remove the library, for they had carried out and hid in a pig’s cot adjoining, about two horse loads of books. There were found many bottles of oil, a box of white wafers stamped, several popish pictures and crucifixes, some relics, a little saints bell, and an incense pot.

‘It doth appear by several examinations that on Sundays and Holy days, many Papists did resort to the Cwm, and the greater part of Mr. Milburn’s family near unto them, but I do not find that ever he himself frequented it.’

A VERY TRYING SITUATION

“Father William Aylworth, alias Harcourt, born in 1625 at Monmouth, was a victim of the Oates persecution (for his death was accelerated by the sufferings he endured under it). His life reads more like a romance than reality. After making his humanity studies he was admitted in his seventeenth year to the novitiate of the English province at Watton in 1641, and was solemnly professed in 1659. He spent nine years in active missionary work, partly in Holland, and partly in the English Mission. Here he proved himself a faithful and apostolic labourer, by his zeal for souls, and by his constancy in suffering—but now the persecution raised by the pretended plot broke out in England, and Father Aylworth was marked for one of its special victims.

“Having been proclaimed, and a reward offered for his apprehension and conviction, he was closely sought for by the pursuivants. By frequent changes of dress, and locality, however, he escaped their search though with the utmost difficulty, and at the cost of severe hardships—his escapes were many and narrow. On one occasion a body of soldiers having received information from a traitor, suddenly broke into the house in which he was staying. He was walking up and down the entrance hall for exercise at the time, engaged in pious meditation. Having no opportunity of retreating to his regular hiding place, his only chance of concealment was a low covered table, beneath which it was scarcely possible for a man to creep. He, however, hastily squeezed himself under it, imploring the help of his Guardian Angel. And for seven long hours during which the search was continued, he lay there, not daring to stir, and scarcely to breathe. The greater part of the band was occupied in seeking for the priest, whom they knew to be hidden in the house—his books and vestments betrayed his presence—the rest kept watch in the hall, to prevent anyone going out. Wearied with parading up and down, they frequently came and sat down and entered into conversation at the very table beneath which he was concealed. After seven hours’ fruitless search, the soldiers took their departure, and the Father was led out of his place of torture

IN THE MARCH WALL

insensible from exhaustion. The hand of God was manifest in his escape, which was looked upon as miraculous, for the searchers, so careful everywhere else, that they left neither wainscots, tapestry, bed hangings, nor floors unexplored, and narrowly examined the beds both beneath and above, yet never gave one thought to the table.

“The Father relates this event in his narrative, and calls it his sixth escape.

(His biographers observe that the miracle of St. Felix of Nola, who was protected by a breastwork of cobwebs, was repeated in this Father's miraculous escape).

“As there was no prospect of the restoration of tranquillity in England, Father Aylworth withdrew into Holland, where, his constitution being broken down by his sufferings in England, he died three months afterwards, on the 10th of September 1679, in the fifty-fifth year of his age, and the thirty-fourth of his religious life. He was solemnly professed in 1658, and we have from his pen the *Metaphysica Scholastica*, published at Cologne in 1675.

“Father John Warner, vice Provincial, in a letter to the Father-general dated September 22nd 1679, mentions the death of Father Aylworth (Harcourt) at Haarlem, in Holland, for whom he asks the accustomed suffrages, and adds :

‘Father William Morgan (of the Cwm) whose confessor Father Aylworth was, takes him for his patron.’

“In another letter, dated October 6th 1679, he states that the Father had been a missionary for ten years, had taught philosophy and theology, was most observant of religious discipline, a zealous lover of the Institute of the Society, a very learned man, possessed of great simplicity, and candour of soul, and one who practised severe austerities, both interior and exterior.

GOOD FRIENDS TO THE JESUITS

“ Father John Warner wrote his own account : “ The escape of the Revd. William Harcourt, vere Aylworth, from the hands of the heretics 1679 ” (The original is among the old Bruges papers now in the Public Record Office, Brussels) (Stonyhurst MSS.).

“ This Father Harcourt, like his namesake who was executed at Tyburn, was connected with the Jesuit College of St. Francis Xavier at the Cwm, in Llanrothal, which is only a short distance from Treago ; and as the Mynors family were Roman Catholics until a late period, the castle was always a sure refuge for persecuted priests.”

In the north tower of Treago there is a secret chamber, which is still called the “ Pope’s Hole,” one of their many hiding-places. A description of this place in verse is given on p. 218.

The head of a marble statue was lately found in the neighbourhood of the Cwm.

SECTION 21

WELSH NEWTON CHURCH

“ We scarce can tread
But we set our foot on some reverend history.”

Of this parish there is no mention in “*Liber Landavensis*” ; and public records, until a comparatively recent date, do not mention it. The name “*Nova Villa Wallicana*” has led to the conclusion that the church is comparatively modern and replaced an older building (*Bristol and Glos. Arch. Soc.*, 1896).

Mr. Wakeman recognised the parish of Welsh Newton (which is a chapelry to Garway) in the hamlet or chapelry of St. Woollstans, mentioned in the records of the Knights Templars and Knights of St. John as an appendage to Garway. He also alludes to remains having existed of St. Woollstan’s Chapel, and the name is still familiar in the parish as that of a remote farm. The present church belonged to the Commandery of Dinmore, the chief seat of the Knights in this county, who held possession of the parish till 1540. Blount says : “ The church is little, having two small bells which, when a-ringing, the neighbours report them to say, Erfyn-Cawl—that is, ‘ turnip pottage ’ for, the soil here being barren, the poor people plant much of this root ” (*Rev. W. Willis, Arch. Soc.*, 1896).

The wonderful stone screen is of the Decorated period, and has three arches, the centre narrower than the other two ; the pillars octagonal, with moulded bases and capitals, and ball-flower ornament in the arches and cornice. For a long time it was enclosed in a wall of lath and plaster, but was opened up in 1869.

It is considered an unique example of that used in early ritual ; instead of having one screen enclosing the apse of the church, it was the fashion to have two—one enclosing the altar itself. It was necessary that the most solemn portions of the service of the mass should be done in seclusion behind the inner screen. The con-

A BURIAL BY FORCE

gregation saw no part of the service involving the consecration of the elements. The outer screen separated the choir monks.

There are only four or five of these screens to be seen in England (*Arch. Cambrensis*, 1909).

There is a fine priest's tomb-stone in the chancel, and the font seems of great antiquity. It probably came from the older building. Part of the pre-Reformation altar is in the church pavement. The chalice and paten are of the date 1689—maker's mark I.L.—and decorated uniquely in the "Chinese taste," with figures, flowers and birds, so fashionable for about ten years in William and Mary's reign. The pewter of the same date is fine. There is also an ancient stone chair, said to have been the seat of the Prior of the Order of Knights Templars, or a sanctuary chair, as the privilege of sanctuary was allowed to all churches belonging to the Knights Templars, and probably this was the original use of it (Mrs. Bagnall Oakeley).

Under the cross in the churchyard lie the remains of John Kemble, an aged Romish priest, who suffered for his faith in 1679. He was a Franciscan Friar, born at Rhydder, near St. Weonards, in 1599. He studied at Douai for some years previously to his ordination in 1625, and, returning that same year to his native country, he began the long apostolate that ushered in his martyrdom (Phillott, *Diocesan Hist.*). The Catholics of this district during the seventeenth century were numerous, fairly organised, and well supplied with priests. Strong in numbers, they were sheltered by a wild, inaccessible country, and protected by great nobles, like the Herberts of Raglan. The disturbance at Allensmore showed their spirit. A recusant, Alice Wellington, having died in the parish, the vicar refused to allow her burial in the churchyard; so one night the Catholics assembled in force, drove off the parson and his friends, and buried the woman with the old religious rites (Read, *Old Herefordshire*).

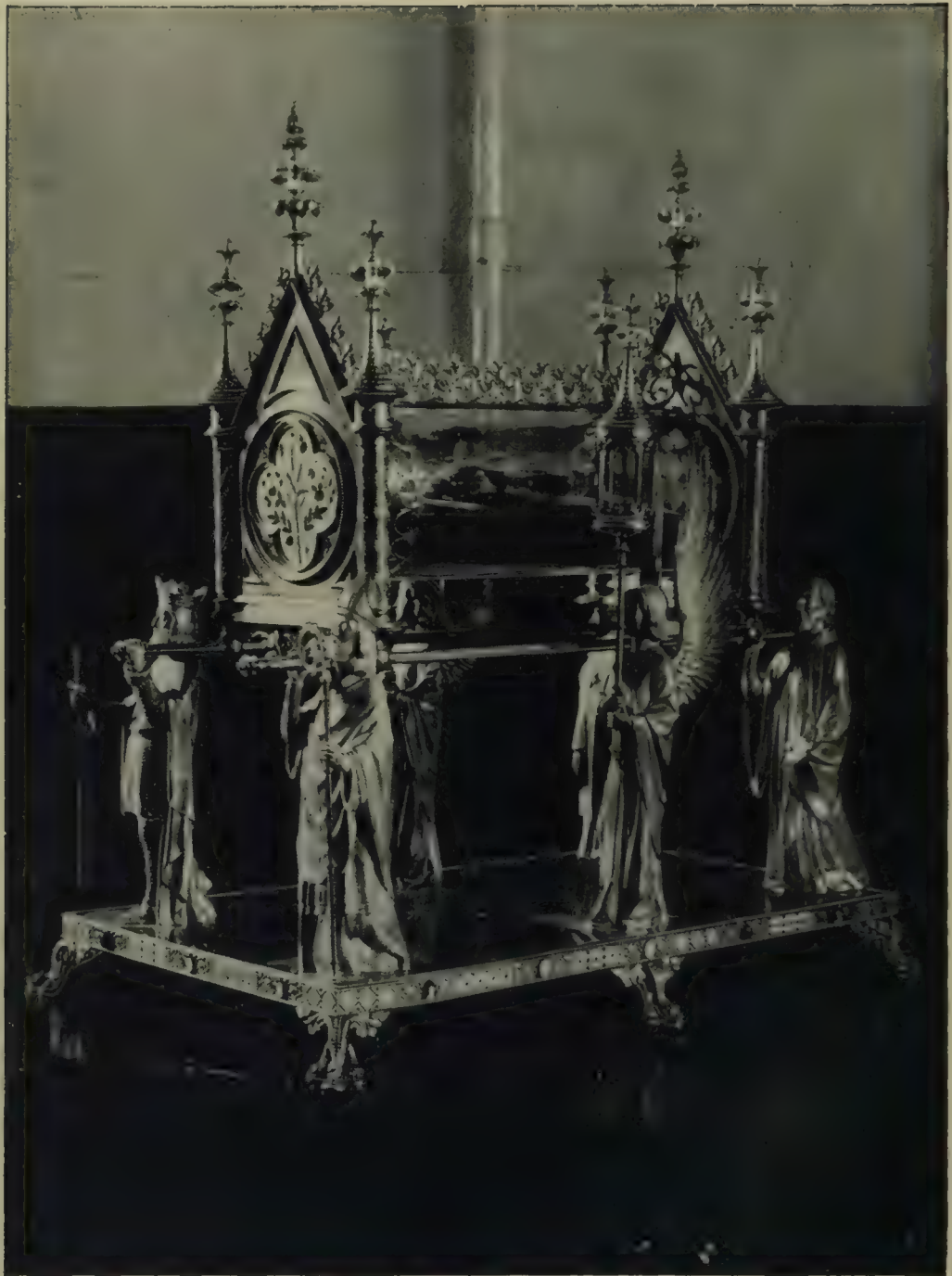
At the Cwm in Llanrothal above the Monnow, as we have seen, the Jesuits founded a college in 1622. The Franciscans are

IN THE MARCH WALL

known to have had a house at the Darren in the same confines. It was to this scattered flock, harassed by persecution, that Father Kemble ministered during 54 years, passing from manor house and castle to farmhouse and cottage, but finding his usual home with his relations at Pembridge castle.

Warned of his danger by his friends, the old man refused to hide himself, for he said "in the course of nature he must die e'er long, and it would be better to die for his religion."

At the top of the "keep" of Pembridge castle used to be seen a desecrated chapel where mass was wont to be celebrated. Here Kemble was discovered at the altar, and arrested by Captain Scudamore of Kentchurch. Though eighty years of age, he was sent to London and thence back to Hereford, where he was thrown into jail. When the Under Sheriff, Mr. Digges, came to take Father Kemble to his execution, he asked to have time given him to complete his prayers, and to be allowed a pipe of tobacco, which, when he had finished, he said he was ready. Mr. Digges joined him in his smoke, and hence arose the old Herefordshire custom of calling the parting pipe "Kemble's pipe." From the jail, Kemble was conveyed in a cart through a vast sympathetic crowd to Widemarsh Common, where he was executed and quartered. Here are his final words, a testimony to the power of religion in the hour of death: "It will be expected of me that I say something, but as I am an old man it cannot be much, not having any concern in the plot, neither indeed believing there is any plot; Oates and Bedloe not being able to charge me with anything when I was brought up in London (though they were with me), makes it evident that I die only for professing the old Roman Catholic religion that first made this kingdom Christian, and whoever intends to be saved must die in that religion. I beg of all whom, either by thought, word or deed, I have offended, to forgive me—for I do heartily forgive all those that have been instrumental or desirous of my death." Then, after private prayer, he was executed. The Protestants who were spectators of his death



RELIQUARY IN THE CHURCH OF ST. FRANCIS XAVIER, HEREFORD,
containing the left hand of the martyr John Kemble, beheaded 1679

THE HAND OF FATHER KEMBLE

acknowledged that they "had never seen one die so like a Christian, and so like a gentleman" (*Hist. of Church of St. Xavier, Hereford*).

In the paper room in the British Museum the following extract may be read in one of the few newspapers published in 1679, "Domestic Intelligence, or "News from City and Country."

Tuesday, August 26th, 1679.

"By letters from Hereford we have advice that upon Friday, 22nd instant, John Kemble, a Popish priest, condemned at last Lent Assizes, was hanged and afterwards beheaded there."

His remains were handed over to Captain Kemble, who placed a stone over them bearing this inscription :

J — K
Dyed 22 August
Anno—Dom.
1679.

The left hand of the martyr is preserved in a rich reliquary in the sacristy of St. Francis Xavier at Hereford (John J. Cummins, O.S.B.).

Roman Catholics frequently visit his grave, and on the anniversary of his death hold a short open-air service, and an address is given by a priest on the life of Father Kemble. On feast days his tomb is still decorated with flowers (Rev. W. Willis).

Letter from Father Abbot to Father Sidney Nicholls,
in charge of the Monmouth Mission, April 16, 1902.

"I trust you have the beautiful little chalice, missal and altar things carefully preserved with the altar, all of which I had brought away from the old castle of Pembridge when Mr. Townley of Burnley sold the castle and farm to a Protestant gentleman in 1839. The holy martyr, Father Kemble, used them for above fifty years there. The book stand he made with his own hands in the gaol at Hereford, and in the Calendar of the Missal there is the memor-

IN THE MARCH WALL

andum of a friend of his in his own handwriting. The old ' glorified crucifix ' of brass gilt I left in the dining room ; I hope it is still carefully preserved, as well as the old processional cross in the church from which Pugin and Hardman took casts when I sent it to be regilt. Both came from Holywell, as well as the old velvet embroidered vestment. They are very valuable treasures in the eyes of antiquarians.

" There are three places in your immediate neighbourhood where mass continued to be said during those horrible days : The Grove (now called the New House Farm), old Hilston, and the Graig ; and it was to gather up the remnants of these missions that we opened Coedangred. At Pembridge Castle mass only ceased to be said in the ' roof-chapel ' in 1837, when it was sold by the Townley family to a Protestant gentleman, and we brought the altar and things away which are now in the chapel in St. Mary's Street, Monmouth."

THOMAS ABBOT.

The well-known family of actors were all descended from the same stock as Father Kemble. Mrs. Siddons was one of them, and it is interesting to know that the wife of Dean Leigh of Hereford was related to this distinguished actress. Tradition says that Mrs. Siddons often visited Kemble's grave at Welsh Newton, and left a sum to be paid annually that the Martyr's last resting-place might be kept in a state of repair and order (*Hist. of Church of St. Xavier, Hereford*).

" Long forgotten years
Will fade into the past
Silently—as before."

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Xavier (St.), Hereford, History of Church of.

INDEX

ABBOT, Father Thomas, 233, 234.
 Abbott, Father, 38, 81.
 Abergavenny, 3.
 " Castle, 101, 102.
 " Priory, 95, 150; Abbot of, 59.
 " , Lord, 48.
 Aberystwyth Castle, 178.
 Acorns and Oakleaves, emblem of St. Bridget, 27, 31.
 Aethan (Aythan), son of Cadivor ap Gwaithvoed, Prince of Cardigan, 94, 95, 144.
 Agricultural labourers' wages in 1838, 6.
 Albemarle, William, Earl of, 111.
 Albo Castro, *see* White Castle
 Ales Barkyte, 10.
 Alexius Commenus, 186.
 Allensmore, 231.
 Almeley, 72.
 Amesbury, convent, 142.
 Andrew, Thomas, 118, 119.
 Anglesea, Island of, Monastery, 128, 129;
 Park of Baron Hill, 129.
Annales Cambriæ, 26.
 Anne, Queen, 154.
 Arlotta, *see* Herleva.
 Arthur, Margarott, 157.
 Arthur of Brittany, 97, 102.
 Artois, Robert, Count of, Blanche, daughter of, 112.
 Ascalon, siege of, 97.
 Athelstan, 168.
 Aylworth, Father, *see* Harcourt.

BABBINGER, J., 153.
 Bach, son of Cadivor ap Gwaithvoed, 94, 95.
 Bacton, bells of, 46.
 Badges, red rose of Lancaster, 32, 144-147;
 white rose of York, 145-147; Tudor rose, 33, 145; ostrich feathers of Wales, 32, 133.
 Baker, David, 200.
 " , Stephen C., Vicar of Skenfrith, 23.
 Balcarres, James, 5th Earl, 66.
 Baldwin, Archbishop, *see* Canterbury, Archbishops of.

R

Bale, Bishop, quoted, 44, 205.
 Balun, Hamelin, 95.
 Baptism in Church porch, 14.
 Bards, 126.
 Barey, William, 195.
 Barrow, William, *see* Harcourt.
 Bartlett, Dr. Headley, 201.
 Bayeux tapestry, 86, 97.
 Bayley, Richard, 209.
 Baynham of Newland, 200.
 Beaufort, Dukes of, 68, 145.
 " , Henry Somerset, 6th Duke of, 120.
 " , Henry, 9th Duke of, 121.
 Beaumont, Lord, Isabella, daughter of, 114.
 Bedloe, William, 232.
 Belesale, 189.
 Bells, curfew, 43; removed from churches and sold by order of the King, 44, 45; ringing of Sanctus bell forbidden, 45; "knolling of the Aves" forbidden, 45; muffled peal rung in memory of Charles I, 45; ringing of more than one on Sabbath forbidden, 75; rung backwards in case of fire, 45; "Gloriosa," Cologne Cathedral, 45.
 Bennett, Robert, Bp. of Hereford, 220, 221.
 Bergavenny, *see* Abergavenny.
 Berkelegh, E. de, 8.
 Berkeley family, 69.
 Berrington, G., 222.
 Bible, Welsh translation, 153.
 Bisley, Benedict, 159.
 " , Jane, 159.
 Black death, 114.
 Black Friars, 59.
 Black Mountains, 3.
 Blackbrooke, 62-70.
 " , Caylyssod, 63.
 " , Chantry Chapel of St. Noë, Noyes or Noyse, 22, 49, 59-62.
 " , Glebe Barn, 61, 72.
 " , Great, 66.
 " , Hill, 63, 67.
 " , House, 61, 67, 68; Chinese wall-paper in, 68-70; Morgan-bed, 62.

INDEX

- Blackbrooke, Little, 66.
 „ Manor, 59, 62, 63.
 „ , Maps of, 63, 66.
 „ old tower, 67.
 Blanche, Queen of Navarre, 90.
 Blaunc Chastell, *see* White Castle.
 Bloomfield, Robert, quoted, 3.
 Bodenham, Philip, 52, 64.
 „ , Roger, 64.
 „ , Thomas, 63, 64.
 Bohun, Gilbert de, 112.
 Bolingbroke, Henry of, *see* Henry IV.
 Bond, Mr., 148.
 Boniface, *see* Canterbury, Archbp. of,
 Bourne, J. B., Curate of Skenfrith, 23.
 Bownd, Dr. Nicholas, 75.
 Brahid, Saint, 26.
 Brand, Rev. J., 131.
 Braose, De, Lord of Skenfrith, 59.
 „ , Giles de, Bp. of Hereford, 16, 101,
 102.
 „ , John de, 108, 109, 128.
 „ , Margaret de, 108, 109.
 „ , Maud, 59, 88, 99, 102.
 „ , Reginald de, 104, 108.
 „ , Reynault de, 102.
 „ , William de, 15, 16, 88, 99-102, 108,
 109, 128, 174.
 Brecknock Castle, 99.
 Bridget, Saint, 14, 26-28; acorns and oak-
 leaves as emblems of, 27, 31.
 Bridstow Church, 26.
 Brigges (Briggs), Sir Hugh, 66.
 „ , John, 23, 66.
 „ , Sir John, 65, 67.
 Brighton pavilion, 70.
 Brittany, Count Allan Fergan, Duke of, 95.
 Broad Oak, 9.
 Bruce, Robert, 168.
 Builth, 108.
 Burgh, de, family arms of, 96, 97.
 „ , Elizabeth, *see* Clarence, Duchess of,
 „ , Francis, 150.
 „ , Harluin de, 97.
 „ , Hubert de, Earl of Kent, 88, 96-101,
 104-108, 110, 113, 115, 124, 127,
 129, 138, 139.
 Burial in sheep's wool, 157-159.
 Burleigh, Lord Treasurer, 78.
 "By and By," 77.
 CADIVOR ap Gwaethvoed, Prince of
 Cardigan, Aethan, son of, 94, 95, 144;
 Bach, son of, 94, 95; Gwen, son of, 94, 95.
 Cadog, Saint, 203.
 Cadwallader, 135.
 Calais, Siege of, 113.
 Caldwell, Father, 217.
 Camera, Gerard de, 101.
 Cannon, first mention of, 132.
 Canterbury, Archbps. of, 129, 137.
 „ , Baldwin, Archbp. of, 187.
 „ , Boniface, Archbp. of, 139.
 „ Cathedral, 134; Leper or Lazar
 house, 95.
 Caractus, 202.
 Caradoc, King of Silures, 202; Gwladys and
 Linus, children of, 202.
 Carter, Phillip, 70.
 Catherine of Braganza, 154.
 Cavern, John, 216.
 Caxton, William, 178.
 Cecil (Seysyll) family, 9, 22, 47.
 „ , Ann, 47, 56.
 „ , Philip, 23, 31.
 „ , Phillip Hastings, Vicar of Skenfrith, 23
 „ , Walwyn, Vicar of Skenfrith, 23.
 „ , William, 23.
 „ , *see also* Seisyll ap Dyfnwal.
 Celtic temper, 126.
 Chantry chapels, 59.
 Charlemagne, 97.
 Charles I, 12, 22, 30, 45, 133, 212.
 Charles II, 154.
 Charles, Betty, 164.
 „ , Elizabeth, 71.
 Charlotte, Princess, 168.
 Chaucer, Geoffrey, 116.
 Chester, Bishop of, 129.
 Chests, church, 34, 153.
 Christian names, curious, 156.
 Christianity introduced into Britain, 202.
 Churchwarden, woman, in 1683, 160.

INDEX

- Churchwarden's accounts, items from, 163, 164.
Churchyard, Thomas, quoted, 1, 35, 71, 83, 84.
Cil Dara, *see* Kildare.
Clarence, Lionel, Duke of, 88.
" , Elizabeth, Duchess of, 88, 90.
Clark, Roger, Rev., 158.
Clement V, 190.
Clergy, mediæval, 20; prisons for, 140.
Clermont, Council of, 186, 187.
Clifford, Walter de, 99.
Clytha, 144.
Cockes, Juliana, 10.
Cock's Heath (Cocksyath), 9.
Coedangred, 63, 234.
Cold Grange, *see* Blackbrooke, Manor.
Cologne Cathedral, "Gloriosa" bell, 45.
Constance, daughter of William the Conqueror, 95.
Constantia, Princess of Spain, 33.
Conway, Abbey, 130.
Cope, wearing of, 38; at Skenfrith Church, 38-41.
Cornwall, Duke of, 113.
Corwen, 174.
Cotswolds, 3.
CoydeAngroud (Coed-Anghred), Coyde huhelters, Coyde pittes, 10.
Crawford, John, 66.
" , Mr., 67.
Croft, Herbert, Bp. of Hereford, 162, 222.
" , Hugh de, 96.
" , Hugo de, 7.
" , Janet, 174.
" , John, 174.
Cromwell, Oliver, 12, 132; Commissioners of, 22, 34, 49.
" , Thomas, 44, 50, 204.
Cross Ash, 63.
Cross used in decoration, 38.
Cross Vane, 63.
Crowe, John, Vicar of Skenfrith, 23.
Cruchowel, 112.
Crucifix used in decoration, 38.
Crusades, 186-190.
"Cupid's Pitch," 77.
Curfew, 43.
Cwm, The College of St. Xavier, 50, 63, 215, 220-229, 231.
Cwm Maddock Farm, 9.
Cygoïn, Mathew de, Vicar of Skenfrith, 16, 21.
Cyndrwn, Prince of Powys, 26.
DARBY, Joseph, Vicar of Skenfrith, 23.
Darran Wood, Priest's Well, legend of, 81.
Darren, 221, 232.
David, Saint, 135.
Davies, Rev., 42.
" , Dumcombe Pycke, 157.
" , Elizabeth, 157.
" , Gomer, Rector of Grosmont, 152.
" , John, Rector of Grosmont, 157.
Davis, John, Vicar of Skenfrith, 23.
" , Mary, 159.
" , Thomas, 66.
"Dawn of Day Wood," 77.
Derby, Earl of, 110.
Devizes Castle, 107.
Digestow, church of St. Dingat, 203.
Digges, Under Sheriff, 232.
Digne, Bishop of, 147.
Dingat, Saint, 203.
Dinmore, Commandery of, 230.
Dixon-Newton, 7.
Docwra, Sir Thomas, 198.
Dominicans, 59.
Dore, Abbey, 59, 62; Bells of, 46; Abbot of, 60; William, abbot of, 8, 60.
Dove-cote at Garway, 196-199.
Dover and Dover Castle, 98.
Dress, extravagance of, during reign of Henry III, 138.
Drew, W., 195.
Druids, 127.
Dunster Castle, 97.
Dyffryn, 63.
EBBOTH, manor of, 113.
Edmund Cruxback, *see* Lancaster, Edmund, Earl of,
Edward the Confessor, 141, 142.
Edward I, 21, 104, 109, 141, 142, 145.
Edward II, 112.
Edward III, 90, 113.

INDEX

Edward IV, 85, 119, 123, 132.
 Edward VI, 9, 12, 44, 48.
 Edward, Black Prince, 113, 133-135.
 Edward Tudor, Prince of Wales, 134.
 Edwards, Thomas, 53.
 Eleanor of Castile, 142.
 Eleanor of Provence, 17, 60, 89, 90, 104, 123,
 136-147, 148, 170.
 Elizabeth, Queen, 9, 84, 90.
 Elizabeth of York, 33, 145.
 Ellis' (Hell's) Wood, 63, 77; convent in, 40,
 78; witch of, 72.
 Emblems, acorn, sacred lamp and floating
 sod of turf, 33; cross and crucifix, 38;
 fleur-de-lis, 32; leek, 135; pomegranate,
 33; *see also* Badges.
 Escheat, 7.
 "Escudamour," 171.
 Essex, G., son of Peter, Earl of, 101.
 Esthenreth, co. Berks, 143.
 Eustace the Monk, 98.
 Evans, Hopkins, Rector of Grosmont, 152.
 „, Hudson, 151, 165.
 „, S., Vicar of Skenfrith, 25.
 Ewyas Harold, 85, 86.
 „, Lordship of, 112, 181.
 Exeter, Synod of, 35.

FAIRS, annual, 166.
 Felix of Nola, Saint, 228.
 Fenwick, John, 216.
 Fergan, Count Allan, *see* Brittany, Duke of,
 Ferrars, Earl, 110.
 Ferrers, Edward, 10.
 Ffraid, St., 26.
 Fiesole, Donatus, Bishop of, 28.
 FitzCount, Brian (Brientius de l'Isle; Brien
 de Wallingford), 88, 95, 148.
 Fletcher, J. Kyrle, 181.
 Fleur-de-lis, 32.
 Forest of Dean, 3, 83.
 Foresta, Guy de, 189.
 "Foresthene" (Forest of Dean?), 83.
 Fors, Aveline de, 111.
 Foulere, Thomas, 119.
 Fourviere, Father Xavier de, 147.

Frank-almoign, 7.
 Frank-pledge, 7.
 Frederick Barbarossa, Emperor of Germany,
 187.
 French Invasion in 1217, 98.
 Fripp, Sir Alfred, 68.
 Frontier manor gallows, 105.
 Fulton, 8.
 Funeral, mediæval, 54; *see also* Shroud.

GABB, —, Mayor of Grosmont, 165
 Gabb, Elizabeth, 156.
 „, John, 156.
 „, Llen, 161.
 Gallows, *see* Frontier.
 Games, *see* Sports.
 Garde, Christopher Leonard, Vicar of Sken-
 frith, 25.
 Garter, order of the, 113, 133.
 Garthorn, George, 210.
 Garway, 76.
 „ Church, 189, 191-194, 230; plate,
 195; bells, 46, 195; holy well, 194;
 Templars' preceptory, 43, 190, 191,
 194, 198, 200; school, 71.
 „ Dove-cote or Columbarium, 190,
 196-199.
 „ Hill, 3, 72.
 „ Manor, 198.
 „ Mill, 198.
 „ Rectory, 198.
 Gavin, Father, 217.
 Geoffrey of Monmouth, 104.
 George III, 168.
 George IV, 168.
 George V, 141, 147.
 Gethin, Rhys, 177.
 Ghent, badge of, 134.
 Gifford, Master R., 131.
 Giraldus Cambrensis, 187.
 Glastonbury Thorn at Grosmont, 80.
 Glendower, Owen, *see* Glyndwr, Owain.
 "Gloriosa," Cologne Cathedral, 45.
 "Gloryhole Valley," 77.
 Gloucester, Bishop of, 152; *see also* Hooper.

INDEX

- Gloucester Cathedral, 105.
 Glyndwr, Owain (Owen Glendower) 118,
 172-185; Alice, daughter of, 178.
 Glyndyfrdwy, 174.
 Goa, grave of St. Francis, 220.
 Godfrey of Bouillon, 187.
 George, George, 53.
 Grâce Dieu Abbey, 9, 12, 17, 18, 21, 22, 55,
 60, 88, 104, 143.
 Graig, The, 3, 4, 234.
 Graig (or Grâce) Llewelyn, 128.
 Green, Archdeacon, 19.
 Gregory VII, 186.
 Gregory IX, 43.
 Grey, Lady Jane, 48, 49.
 " , Reginald de, 174.
 " , Walter, Archbp. of York, 108.
 Grosmont, 4, 7, 8; Devastated by Rhys
 Gethin, 177; Raising of money
 for highways, 1677, 159; Spellings
 of name from 1162, xvi.
 " Castle, 10, 16, 84, 85, 94, 96, 99-
 101, 103, 104, 107-113, 115, 120-
 125, 129, 130, 132, 133, 139-141,
 143-145, 148, 176, 177, 181, 203;
 Last governor of, 48, 120;
 Master sergeant of, 118, 119.
 " Church, 140, 141, 148-170; Ad-
 vowson, 109, 152; Bells, 148,
 155; Items from churchwarden's
 accounts from, 1790, 163, 164;
 organ, 151; Parish hutch, 153;
 Plate, 155; Queen Eleanor's
 Chapel, 165; Registers, 156-160;
 Restoration 1879, 151; Value of
 living, 150; Vestry meeting,
 1692, 161.
 " Churchyard, Cross supposed to
 mark John of Kent's grave, 150,
 172; Effigy presumed to be John
 of Kent, 179.
 " , Cold Grange, tithe of, 162.
 " , Hermit of, 181-185.
 " , Lanvayres Chapel, 162.
 " , Manor, 11, 109.
 " , Mayors of, 157, 165.
 " , Steward of, 182, 183.
 Grosmont, Viscounts de, 145.
 " , Henry de, *see* Lancaster, Duke of,
 Grove, The, 234.
 Gwen, son of Cadivor ap Gwaithvoed, 94, 95.
 Gwent, King of, 94.
 " , Princes of, 32.
 Gwent Iscoed, 182.
 Gwentian, 6.
 Gwillim, *see* Willim.
 Gwnedd, 6.
 Gwyn, —, Mayor of Grosmont, 165.
- H**AGIOSCOPES, 33.
 Hainault, Counts of, 133.
 Hall, Lydia, 158.
 Halliday, Mr., 155.
 Harcourt, Father William, alias Waring,
 Aylworth, and Barrow, 215-219, 227-229.
 Harding, Canon, 92.
 Harlech Castle, 178.
 Harp or "Telyn" of Welsh bards, 126.
 Harries, Thomas, 64.
 Hastings Castle, 86.
 Havering, John de, 112.
 Hawkins, Thomas, 74.
 Hay Castle, 99.
 Heath, Richard, Rector of Grosmont, 159.
 Hell's Wood, *see* Ellis' Wood.
 Henry II, 12, 96, 105, 190.
 Henry III, 16, 17, 21, 60, 96, 98, 103-106,
 108-110, 124, 125, 128-130, 136-142,
 145.
 Henry IV, 173-176.
 Henry V, 12, 129, 175-178; standard of, 146.
 Henry VII, 33, 142, 145.
 Henry VIII, 12, 17, 22, 44, 129.
 Heraldry, earliest examples of, 97.
 Herbert, Thomas, 18, 163.
 Herberts of Raglan, 231.
 Hereford, Occupation of, 1233, 129; Cap-
 tured by Scots, 1645, 162.
 " Cathedral, 102, 162; North Tran-
 sept, 170; Window in memory of
 Samuel Sebastian Wesley, 169;
 Chained library, 222.
 " , Prison for guilty clergy, 140.

INDEX

- Hereford, Sheriff of, 112.
 „ , Shrine of St. Thomas, 118.
 Hereford, Viscount, 48.
 „ , Henry, Duke of, 116.
 „ , Matthew de, priest of Skenfrith, 16, 21.
 „ , Walter, Earl of, 95.
 Hereford, Bishops of, 153, *see also* Bennett
 „ , Robert; Braose, Giles de; Croft,
 Herbert; Peter de Aquablanca.
 „ , Godwin, Bp., of 222.
 „ , Herbert, Bp. of, 222.
 Hereford, John, Dean of, 140.
 „ , Leigh, Dean of, 234.
 „ Herefords,” 6.
 Herefordshire, Survey of Ministry of, 1646, 20.
 Heriot, 7.
 Herleva or Arlotta, mother of William the Conqueror, 97.
 Herring, W. Ralph, 68.
 Hilston, 63, 234.
 Hiltoft, John de, 133.
 Holland, Matilda, Countess of, 115.
 „ , William, Count of, 115.
 „ Holy Mountain,” *see* Skyrrid.
 Holyhead, 26.
 Holywell, 39.
 Hom meadows, 63.
 Hooper, Bishop of Gloucester, 45.
 Hopkin, Richard, Vicar of Garway, 195.
 Hopkins, David, 22.
 Hoskins, Serjeant, 6.
 Hosten, Joseph, 42.
 Hour glasses, 20.
 Howell ap Thomas, 118, 119.
 „ , Hugh ap, 22.
 „ , Robert ap, 109.
 Howorth, Sir Henry, 148.
 Hugh, Old, 52.
 Hughs, Lizaboth, 51.
 „ , Philip, 51.
 Hutch, Church, 34, 153.

 „ I NEXTINGUISHABLE fire,” 28.
 Innocent III, Pope, 16, 35, 44, 101.

 Isabella of Angoulême, 90, 102, 105.
 Isle, Brientius de l’, *see* Fitz Count.

JACK, Richard, R.A., 33.
 Jackson, Peter Rothwell, 67, 68.
 „ , Robert Newton, 19, 25, 68, 121.
 James I, 6, 135.
 „ II, 154.
 James, Richard, 164.
 Jane, old, 52.
 Jasso, Juan de, 220.
 Jay, Edward, 209.
 Jean d’Albret, King of Navarre, 220.
 Jerusalem and the Crusaders, 186–188.
 Jesuit colleges, 224; *see also* Cwm.
 Jesuits, persecution of, 215–229, 231–234.
 Jevon, Sir Thomas ap, Vicar of Skenfrith, 18, 22.
 Joan, Princess, 108, 128, 129.
 John, King, 16, 21, 39, 44, 96, 97, 99, 102, 103, 105, 127, 128.
 John of Gaunt, *see* Lancaster, Duke of,
 John of Gwent, 172.
 John of Kent, 150, 171, 172, 178, 179.
 John, son of Peter the Saracen, Vicar of Skenfrith, 16, 21, 102.
 Jones, Sergt. A., 58.
 „ , Cymbyn, 157.
 „ , T., 164.
 „ , Thomas, 164.
 „ , William, 161.
 Judeith y Ginger bred maker, 53.
 „ Juliets,” 4, 86, 88, 146.
 Justice, Elizabeth, 158.

KEMBLE, George, 200.
 Kemble, Father John, 215, 231–234.
 „ , Captain, 233.
 Kemble’s pipe, 232.
 Kempley Church, 37.
 Kent, Earl of, *see* Burgh, Hubert de,
 „ , John of, *see* John.
 Kentchurch, 46, 172, 179, 180.
 Kent’s stones, 179.
 Kibworth, registers, 50.
 Kildare (Cil Dara), 26.

INDEX

Kildare (Cil-Dara), Cell of the Oak, 27 ; Cathedral, 27 ; Nunnery, 27.
 Knight's fee, 100.
 Knights Hospitallers, 188, 194, 198, 200, 230.
 Knights Templars, 142, 186-194, 230, 231.
 Kut, Philip, 60.
 Kyrle, John, 43.

L ADY Chapels, 140.
 Lancaster, Duchy of, 109 ; Receiver to, 47, 48 ; Rose of, 32, 144-147.
 Lancaster, Dukes of, 32 ; castles of, 119, 123.
 „ , Henry Bolingbroke, Duke of, *see* Henry IV.
 „ , Henry de Grosmont, Duke of, 33, 38, 60, 112-114, 134, 145.
 „ , John of Gaunt, Duke of, 33, 88, 90, 115, 116, 118, 120, 134, 145.
 „ , Avalene, Duchess of, 90.
 „ , Blanche, Duchess of, 38, 90, 114-118, 204.
 „ , Isabella, Duchess of, 114.
 „ , Matilda (or Maud), Duchess of, 90, 114, 115.
 „ , Queen Elizabeth, Duchess of, 9.
 „ , Edmund, Earl of, called Cruxback, 8, 17, 21, 60, 88, 90, 104, 110-112, 136, 141, 143, 145, 179.
 „ , Henry, Earl of, 112, 113, 145.
 „ , Maud, daughter of, 113.
 „ , Thomas, Earl of, 111, 112, 145.
 Land tenure, 143.
 Langhorn, Anthony, 216.
 Langland, William, quoted, 20.
 Langtoft, Peter of, quoted, 137.
 Langton, Stephen, 105.
 Langua, *see* Llangua.
 Language used during reign of Henry III, 143.
 Lanteilo, Lantelioc, Lantilioc, *see* White Castle.
 Laud's Prayer Book, 212.
 Law terms, old, 7.
 Lawrence, Corpl. H., 58.
 Lea, Thomas Davis, 198.
 Leek, The, 135.

Legends, 78-82.
 Leicester, Earls of, *see* Lewis of Bavaria ; Montford, Simon de.
 Leigh, Dean of Hereford, 234.
 Lenten veil, 28.
 Lentilian, Lentilioc, *see* White Castle.
 Leprosy, 95.
 Leven, Lord, 214.
 Lewis of Bavaria, Emperor, 115.
 Lewis, David, vicar of Skenfrith, 21, 22, 45.
 „ , Henry, Rev., 66.
 „ , Tubby, 163.
 Leyland, John, 83, 95.
 Libraries, Monastic, destroyed, 204, 205.
 Lincoln Cathedral, chasubles in, 38.
 Lindsay, Col. The Hon. John, 66.
 Lira, Abbey of, 59.
 Llandaff, Lord Bishop of, 16, 25 ; Herwald, Bishop of, 26 ; *see also* Morgan, William.
 Llanfair, 7.
 Lanfair Cilgoed, 62.
 Llangattock, church of St. Cadog, 203.
 Llangattock-veibon-aval, 7.
 Llangua (Langua), 7 ; Black Friars cell, 59 ; Prior of, 60, 111.
 Llanrothal, *see* Cwm, The.
 Llanrwst Church, 130.
 Llansanffraid or St. Friede's Well, 26.
 Llan-sant-Gwainerth, *see* St. Weonard Church.
 Llantellen, 66, 67.
 „ farm, dove-cote, 197.
 Llanthony Abbey, 95 ; Prior of, 112.
 Llantilio (Whitecastle, White-chapel), 18 ; spellings of name from 1162, xvi.
 „ Castle, *see* White Castle.
 „ Manor, 109.
 Llantilio Crassenny, 7.
 Llantilio Pertholoy, Church of St. Teilo, 109, 203.
 Llanvihangel-tavern-Bach, 7.
 Llanweir Liscoed, 77.
 Llewellyn and James, bellfounders, 195.
 Llewelyn, Prince, 88, 102, 103, 108, 124-131, 173, 174.
 Llwyngwil, Rector Davis' Clergy Home, 153.
 Lom, Peter de, Vicar of Skenfrith, 23.
 London, Church of Black Friars, 108, 142.

INDEX

- London, Fleet Prison, 49.
 „ , Friars Minorities, 143.
 „ , Marriage of Henry III, 137, 138.
 „ , Newgate, 65, 217.
 „ , Nunnery of Santa Clara, Minorities,
 111.
 „ , St. Giles' in the Fields, 217.
 „ , St. Ignatius jesuit college, 224.
 „ , S. Martin in the Vestry, 189.
 „ , St. Paul's Cathedral, 145.
 „ , Savoy Hotel, 139.
 „ , Temple Church, 189.
 „ , Tothill Fields, 137.
 „ , Tower Hill, 49.
 „ , Tyburn, 217.
 „ , Westminster Abbey, 111, 114, 140-
 142 ; Bell in, 43 ; Lady chapel,
 built by Henry III, 140.
 „ , Westminster, Queen's chambers at,
 139.
 „ , Whitehall Palace, 108.
 „ , Bishop of, 106, 137.
 Longfellow, quoted, 211.
 Longtown, 94.
 Lords Marchers, 124, 138, 203 ; their power
 taken away 1535, 180, *et passim*.
 Loyola, Ignatius, 220, 224.
 Lugduno, John de, 189.
 Lysart, Admiral, 19, 23.
- M**cCAN, Pat, 163.
 Maddock (Madock), family, 9.
 „ , Joan ap, 9.
 Malthus, William, 119.
 Mardon, Lieut. Arthur, 58.
 Margaret of Scotland, Princess, 88.
 Marquis, introduction of title, 124.
 Marshal, William, *see* Pembroke, Earl of,
 Marten, John, Rector of Grosmont, 156.
 Martial, 202.
 Mary, Queen, 48, 49, 56, 89, 90.
 Mary II, Queen, 154.
 Mary, Queen of Scots, 49.
 Mary of Modena, Princess, 154.
 Mary, Princess (1551), 49 ; (1922), 111.
- Massey, Colonel, 201.
 Mather-Jackson, Sir Henry, 121.
 Maxwell-Lyte, Sir Henry, 133.
 Maynard, Elsie, 92.
 Meredith, George, 154.
 Merewether, Dean, 39, 169.
 Merlin, 176.
 Michael, Greek Emperor, 186.
 Milbourne, Mr., 222.
 Milburn, family, 226.
 Milford Haven, 176.
 Miller, George, Vicar of Skenfrith, 23.
 „ , „ Parson,” 77.
 Minos, Rev. P. J. Oliver, 191, 194.
 Mistral, M. Frederic, 147.
 Molay, James de, 189.
 Monasteries, founding and spoliation of, 203-
 206 ; destruction of libraries, 204, 205.
 Mōne, John de, *see* Monmouth.
 Monē, River, 10, 54, 83
 Monmouth, 3.
 „ , Castle, 94, 110, 112, 115, 118, 119.
 „ , Chapel in St. Mary's Street, 234.
 „ , Hospitals of Holy Trinity and
 St. John, 104.
 „ , Honour, 110, 112.
 „ , Lordship of, 109.
 „ , Priory, 104, 203 ; Prior of, 192.
 „ , Roman Catholic Church, 39.
 Monmouth (Monē), Durandus de, 8.
 „ , Geoffrey of, *see* Geoffrey.
 „ , John de, 16, 17, 59, 103, 104, 110,
 143.
 Monmouth, Bishop of, 25.
 Monmouthshire castles ordered to be des-
 troyed, 119, 123.
 Monnington, Margaret, 174.
 „ , Roger, 174.
 Monnow, river, 3, 5, 83, 130 ; Bridge built
 by Owain Glyndwr, 178.
 Montford, Simon de, Earl of Leicester, 110.
 Moore, Father, 39.
 Moreton, Robert, Earl of, 97.
 Morgan family, 40, 67.
 „ , Ann, 47, 49, 51, 56.
 „ , Charles, 160.
 „ , George, 63.

INDEX

- Morgan, John, 11, 22, 34, 39, 47-49, 55, 62, 120.
 „ , Mary, 164.
 „ , Philip 11, 48, 49, 51, 150.
 „ , Philip, ap, 62.
 „ , Richard, 62.
 „ , Sir Richard, 49, 56, 60.
 „ , Thomas, 52, 77.
 „ , W., 163.
 „ , William, Bp. of Llandaff, 153.
 „ , Father William, 50, 63, 222, 223, 228.
 Mornington, Lord, 168.
 Morr, William de la, 189.
 Morris, Valentine, 5.
 „ , William, 68.
 Mortimer, Sir Edmund, 178.
 Mounds in castles, 85, 86.
 Mynors family, 208, 211, 214, 229.
 „ , Mr., 208.
 „ , Meliora, 210.
 „ , Richard, 198.
 „ , Roger, 198.
- N**AMES, curious, 77, 156.
 Naseby, battle of, 214.
 Navarre, Blanche, Dowager Queen of, 112.
 Newcastle, 72.
 New House Farm, 234.
 New Radnor, 175.
 Nicholas, Saint, 148, 166.
 „ , Sir H., 133.
 Nicholls, Father, 233.
 North, Lady Charlotte, 66.
 Norton, 10.
 Norton Cross, 56, 63; witch of, 72.
 Norton, William, Vicar of Skenfrith, 23, 66.
 Nur-el-din, 199.
- O**AKELEY, Mrs. Bagnall, 89, 92 *et passim*.
 Oates, Titus, 215, 217, 227, 232.
 Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, 97.
 Offa's dyke, 105.
 Oldcastle, 94.
 Oldcastle, Sir John, 172.
 Oldfield, Mrs., 158.
- Oppenheim Cathedral, 31.
 Orcop, 72, 76.
 Ostery, 10.
 Ostrevant, 133.
 Otto of Bavaria, 90.
 Owen, William, 9.
 Oxen, 6.
- P**ANNAGE, 7.
 „ “Paradise,” 77.
 Paris, Matthew, 99, 101, 107, 138.
 Parish meetings held in public houses, 163.
 Parr, Catherine, 204.
 Parry, Elinor, 157.
 „ , John, 163.
 „ , Joseph, 157.
 „ , Lewis, Vicar of Skenfrith, 22, 31, 34, 49.
 Paternoster, John, 143.
 „ , Richard, 143.
 Paul, St., imprisonment of, 202.
 Pemberton, Walter de, 112.
 Pembridge Castle, 85, 200, 201, 232-234.
 Pembridge, Ralph de, 200.
 Pembroke, Earl of, 107.
 „ , Henry, Earl of, 9.
 „ , William Marshal, Earl of, 98, 99, 103-105.
 Peter de Aquablanca, Bp. of Hereford, 139, 140, 170.
 Peter of Savoy, 139.
 Peter the hermit, 186.
 Peter the Saracen, *see* Saracen.
 Philip of Spain, 48.
 Philip the Fair, 188.
 Philipp, Francis, 10.
 Philippa of Hainault, 90, 133.
 Philippe Auguste, King of France, 187.
 Philips, John, Vicar of Skenfrith, 157.
 Phillippes, Jacobus, Vicar of Skenfrith, 23, 30, 31.
 Phillips, Thos., Curate of Skenfrith, 23.
 „ , William, 155.
 „ , *see also* Pugh.
 Pigeon towers, 196-199.
 Pigeons, carrier, 198, 199.
 Pilleth, battle of, 177.
 Pincenza, Council of, 186.

INDEX

- R**ALPH of Coggeshall, 97.
 Recusant, 52.
 Red rose of Lancaster, 32, 144-147.
 Redcastle (Powis Castle), 65.
 Reece, Richard, Vicar of Skenfrith, 23.
 Registers, parish, first mandate for keeping, 50.
 Rheims Cathedral, 141.
 Rhuddlan Castle, 131.
 Richard Coeur de Lion, 96, 97, 187.
 Richard II, 116, 173, 174.
 Richard, Brother, 196.
 Rigval, Peter, 109.
 Ritual of Roman and Anglican Churches, 38.
 Roads of Monmouthshire, 4, 5.
 Robert of Normandy, 199.
 Roberts, Walter, 160, 161.
 Roches, Peter des, Bp. of Winchester, 98.
 Rochester, Bishop of, 129.
 Rockfield, 7.
 Roet, Philippa, 116.
 Rolls, Mrs. Elizabeth Mary, 151.
 „, John E. W., 151.
 „, John Allan, 151.
 Romeo, 136.
 Roslwyn, 144.
 Ross, Prison for guilty clergy, 140; Tenor bell, 43.
 Rosser, James, 71.
 „, Roger ap., vicar of Skenfrith, 22, 36, 60.
 Rous, R. de, 8.
 Rudhall family, bell founders, 42, 43.
 „, Abraham, 42, 155.
 „, John, 155, 210.
 „, Thomas, 42.
 Ruthin, Lord Grey of, 174.
 Rys, Thomas ap, 9.
 „, Thomassyn, 9.
- S**ABBATH-breaking, 75-77; Sunday sports and wakes, 76.
 St. Aloysius Jesuit college, 224.
 St. Freide's Well, *see* Llansanffraid.
 St. George, John de, 189.
 St. Maughan's, 7; Common, 5.
 St. Noë Chantry Chapel, *see* Blackbrooke.
 St. Valerie, Maud de, 99.

INDEX

- St. Vincent Abbey, Maine, 95.
 St. Weonard's Church (Llan-sant-Gwainerth),
 207; plate, 209; bells, 46, 210; ancient
 mound near church, 208.
 St. Woolstan's Chapel, 230.
 St. Xavier, Jesuit College of, 50, 63.
 Saladin, Sultan of Egypt, 187.
 Salisbury, Lord, 221.
 " , Robert, Earl of, 50.
 Sancto, George, *see* St. George.
 Sanctuary, right of, 192.
 Sanders, Thomas, 161.
 Saracen, Peter, John, son of, Vicar of Sken-
 frith, 16, 21, 102.
 Saunders, John, 160.
 Savoy, Count of, Beatrice, daughter of, 136.
 Sayer, Miss, 88.
 Scenefrit, Scenefrid, Scenfroth, *see* Skenfrith.
 Scenshall, 224.
 Sconfroth, *see* Skenfrith.
 Scots rebellion, 1639, 214.
 Scott, Sir Walter, quoted, 55.
 Scudamore, (Skydmore), family, 171.
 " , Captain, 222, 223, 232.
 " , Mr., 222.
 " , Alice, 174, 178.
 " , Amb., 161.
 " , Ann, 64.
 " , George, 64.
 " , J., 161.
 " , Sir James, 221.
 " , John, Viscount, 6.
 " , Sir John, 44, 174, 178.
 " , John, 9, 10, 205, 223.
 " , Col. Lucas, 121.
 " , William, 9.
 Scutage, 100.
 Seisyll ap Dyfnwal, 101.
 Seizin, 7.
 Senghewynth, *see* Skenfrith.
 Seycyll, *see* Cecil.
 Seye, Robert de, 8.
 Shakespeare, quoted, 97.
 Shrewsbury, Earl of, 205.
 Shropshire labourers, 175.
 Shrouds of sheep's wool, 157-159.
 Siddons, Mrs., 234.
 Sinfraed, Sinfrid, Sinifred, Sinifrid, *see* Sken-
 frith.
 Sion (or John) of Gwent, *see* John.
 Sion (or John) of Kent, *see* John.
 Skenevreoth, *see* Skenfrith.
 Skenfrith, 1-11; spellings of name from 1162,
 xvi, 16n., 26; wake, 76.
 " , "Bell" Inn, 1, 63.
 " , Bridge, 3, 83; wire bridge, 71.
 " , "Brink," The, 63, 71.
 " , Castle, 1, 3, 8, 10-12, 16, 18, 54,
 62, 67, 68, 71, 78, 83-93, 94-96,
 99-105, 108-110, 112-115, 118,
 120, 121, 124, 125, 128, 144, 146,
 180, 203; Constable of, 109, 119;
 Governor of, 39, 48, 120; Master
 Sergeant of, 118, 119; Historical
 fête, 1899, 87-93; Legends, 73, 78.
 " , Church, 1, 8, 11, 12-61, 87, 92, 120;
 Advowson, 21-25, 32, 49, 60, 68,
 104, 109, 143; Bells, 23, 42-46;
 Bequests to, 49, 60; Cope, 38-
 41; Fifteenth cent. glass, 29;
 Font, 22, 34; Lectern, 33; Len-
 ten veil, 28; Minstrëls' pew, 23,
 34, 61; Morgan pew, 50; Mural
 paintings, 35-37; Parish chests
 or hutches, 34; Patron saint,
 26-28; Piscina, 31; Pulpit, 23;
 Reading desk, 33; Rectory and
 Parsonage, appropriation of, 60;
 Registers, 50-53; Restorations
 (1661), 22, 37; (1681), 31; (1910),
 25, 68; Sanctuary, carving, 31;
 Stained windows, 146; Stone
 slab, 28; Stone steps discovered,
 34; Tombs of John and Philip
 Morgan, 47, 49, 56; Value of
 living, 25; Vicars, 21-25.
 " , Churchyard, 3, 54-58; Extended,
 25; Sports and wakes in, 23,
 76, 77.
 " , Folklore and legends, 71-82.
 " , Holm lands, 11, 22.
 " , Hundred, 6, 7, 12; Population in
 1800, 6.
 " , Jail, 71.

INDEX

- Skenfrith, Lords of, 32, 33, 94-121.
 " Manor, 22, 109; Local records, 7-12; Queen Elizabeth as Lady of the Manor, 9.
 " Mill, 8, 10.
 " , Quaint local place names, 77.
 " , Record in Great War, 1914-1918, 58.
 " , Road from " Bell " Inn to Norton, 71.
 " Roman Catholic Chapel, 10.
 " Stocks, 58, 74.
 " , Tyr Constable, 63.
 " , Waen, The, 11, 47.
 Skenfrith, John de, 8.
 " , Weyruilla, 8.
 Skenfry, Skinfroth, Skonfrey, Skynfreth, *see* Skenfrith.
 Skinner, A. B., 40.
 Skydmore, *see* Scudamore.
 Skyrrid or " Holy Mountain," 3; legend of, 82
 Smith, Miss, 91.
 " , Charles, 66.
 " , James, 163.
 Solemn League and Covenant, 21.
 Somerset, Henry, *see* Beaufort, Duke of,
 Spain, Royal arms of, 33.
 Speke, Mr., 19.
 " , George, 23.
 " , William, Vicar of Skenfrith, 19, 23, 25.
 Spenser, quoted, 96.
 Sports on Sunday, 75, 76, 77, 166, 167.
 Springett family, 156.
 " , James, Mayor of Grosmont, 157, 161, 165.
 Stafford, Matilda, wife to son of Earl of, 114.
 " , Ralph, son to Earl of, 114.
 " , Ralph, Earl of, 114.
 Stamford, Grey Friars, 204.
 Stammers, Mr., 92.
 Star Chamber abolished, 180.
 " Starve Crow Farm," 77.
 Stephens, John, 23.
 Stephens, William, Vicar of Skenfrith, 23.
 Stoke, John de, 189, 191.
 Sugar Loaf, 3.
 Sunday, *see* Sabbath.
 " Sweet Richard," 174.
 Swynford, Catherine, 116, 120.
 Sycherth, 174.
 Symonds, Thomas, Mayor of Grosmont, 157.
 " , William 157.
 Synefraid, *see* Skinfrith.
 TAUNTON Nunnery, 40.
 Taylor, J. & Co., bellfounders, 210.
 Taylor, Silas, 190.
 Teilo, Saint, 203.
 Temple, Master of the, 107.
 Teywarch, Lord of Rhos, Tangwyste, daughter of, 103.
 Thomas, Leyton, 46.
 " , Leyton Pershouse, 33.
 " , Capt. Robin, 58.
 " , Lieut. Trevor, 58.
 " , Capt. Vincent, 58.
 " Toad's Hole," 77.
 Torrel, William, 142.
 Townley family, 233, 234.
 Treago, 207, 211-215.
 " Castle, 211-214, 218, 229; Pope's Hole, 218, 229.
 Treheron, 10.
 Trelleck, 179.
 Triads of the Isle of Britain, 202.
 Tudor rose, 33.
 Tumulus near St. Weonard Church, 208.
 Turnaston, 20.
 Turner, Father, 217.
 " , Sir James, 132.
 Twins (gemelli) of Thomas —, 51.
 Tyberton, manor of, 115.
 Tyddeworth, Durante de, 110.
 Tye Gwyn, 10.
 Tyr Constable, *see* Skenfrith.
 Tyre-gaute, 10.
 ULSTER, William, Earl of, 113.
 Ulster, Maud, Countess of, 113.
 Universities, threatened dissolution of, 204.
 Urban II, 186.
 VAUGHAN, Colonel, 71.
 Vaughan, Ann, 157.
 " , Corpl. H., 58.
 " , Henry, Rector of Grosmont, 161.

INDEX

- Vaughan, Roger, 150.
 „ , Walter, 157.
 Vestments, wearing of, 38.
 Victoria, Queen, 74.
 Vien, Henry de, Vicar of Skenfrith, 59.
 „ , Hugh de, Vicar of Skenfrith, 8, 21.
 Vynglwyd, Jorwerth, 27.
- W**AEN, The, *see* Skenfrith.
 Wages, mediæval, 132; of agricultural labourers, 1838, 6.
 Wakeman, Mr., 230.
 Wakes, 76.
 Wales, divided into shires, 180.
 Wales, National Library of, 64.
 Wales, Bishops of, 153.
 Wales, Prince of, 113; *see also* Prince of Wales's feathers.
 Walford, Capt. W. G., 58.
 Wallingford, Brien de, *see* Fitz Count.
 Wallpapers, 68-70.
 Walston, 10.
 Walwyn, Cha., 161.
 „ , James, 23.
 Waring, William, *see* Harcourt.
 Warner, Father John, 228, 229.
 Watkins, John, Mayor of Grosmont, 165.
 Watlington, 119.
 Webb, Mr., 196.
 Webtree, Hundred of, 20.
 Weir, Mr., 13.
 Welch-Bicknor, 7.
 Weld, Mr., 215.
 Wellesley, Marquis, 168.
 Wellington, Duke of, 168.
 Welsh bard, *see* Bard.
 Welsh Newton Church (Nova Villa Wallicana), 230-234.
 Welswe, *see* Wesley.
 Weobly, 72.
 Wesley (Welswe, Wesley), Charles, 168, 169.
 „ , Charles Alexander, Rector of Grosmont, 152.
 „ , Guy de, 168.
 „ , John, 168.
 „ , Samuel Sebastian, 169, 170.
 „ , Walter de, 168.
- Wheeler, Robert, 23.
 Whipping-posts introduced, 74.
 Whitbread, Father, 217.
 White, Thomas, 216.
 White Castle, 8, 10, 11, 16, 18, 84, 94, 96, 99-104, 109, 110, 112, 113, 115, 120, 121, 123-125, 144, 180; Governor of, 48, 120; Master Sergeant of, 118, 119; spellings of name from 1162, xvi; *see also* Llantilio.
 White rose of York, 145-147.
 Whitehorn, Mrs. 166.
 Whitfield, George, 168.
 Widemarsh Common, 232.
 William the Conqueror, 95, 97, 196.
 William III, 154.
 William, King of Scotland, 106.
 Williams, Anne, 163.
 „ , George, 157.
 „ , H., 163.
 „ , John, 63.
 „ , Joseph, 163.
 „ , L., 195.
 „ , Martha, 164.
 „ , Mary, 163.
 „ , Sammelly, 157.
 „ , Tosf, 52.
 „ , Warren, 89.
 Willim (or Gwillim), John, Vicar of Grosmont, 154.
 Winchester Castle, 139.
 „ , Bishop of, 139.
 Windsor (Wyndesore), Forester of, 119.
 „ , Castle, 102.
 Witches, 72, 73.
 Wonastow, 7.
 Worcester, Marquis, of, 50, 222.
 Wormesley Abbey, 205.
 Wright, Mr., 208.
- X**AVIER, St. Francis, 220, 233.
- Y**EAR, date of commencement of, 51.
 York, Catherine, Duchess of, 154.
 York, James, Duke of, *see* James II.
 „ , Princess Mary, Duchess of, 154.
 „ , Archbishop of, *see* Grey, Walter.
 Ysgynvraith, *see* Skenfrith.



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